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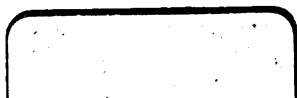
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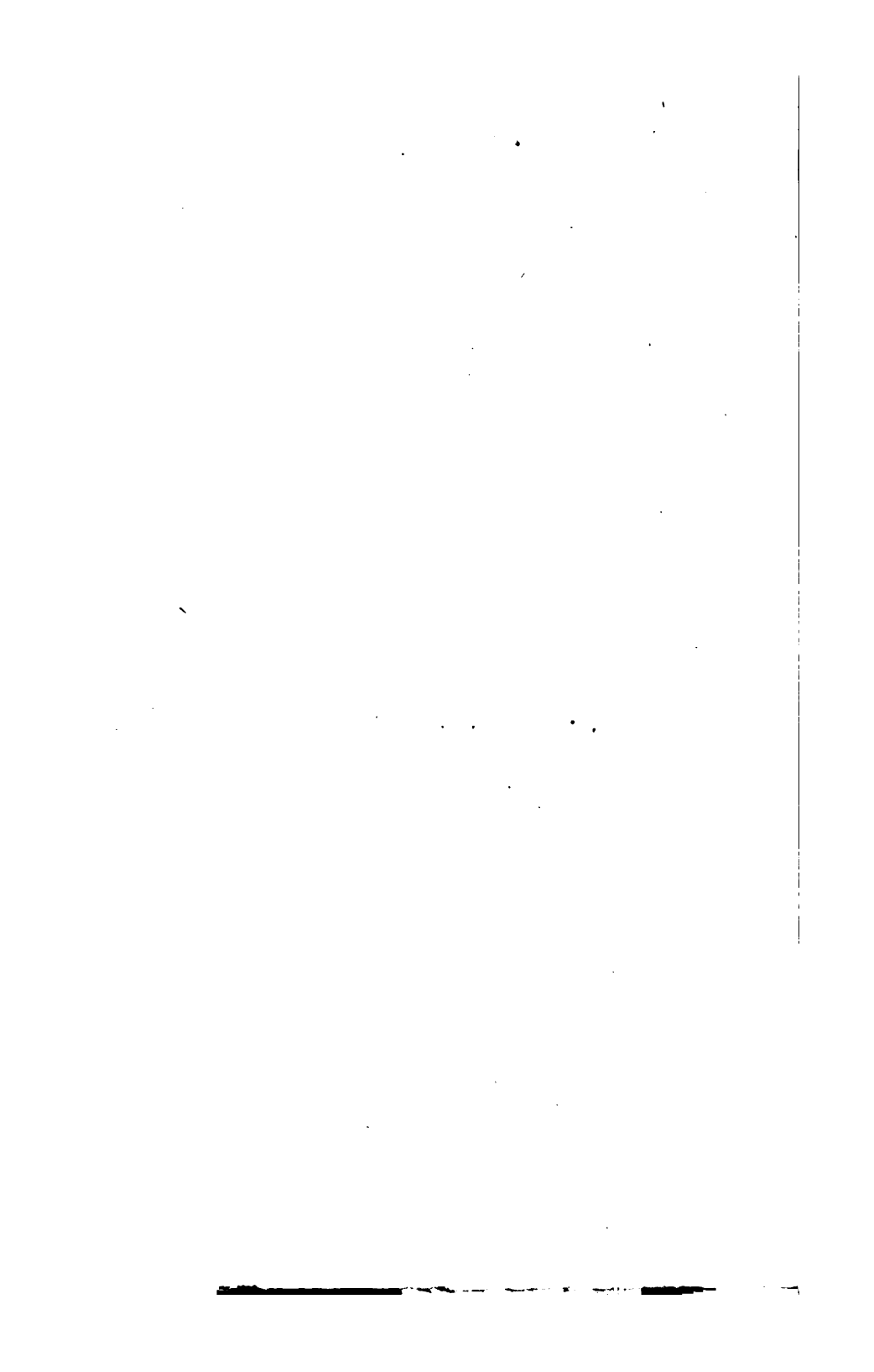




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WAIT AND HOPE.

BY

JOHN EDMUND READE,

AUTHOR OF

"ITALY," "THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS,"

ETC., ETC.

"What teach us the great angels, Life and Time?
To sympathize with human frailties,
And know our own; to bear and to forbear,
To wait and hope: wisdom's far peaks attained
By the tired spirit and oppressed eye."

Revelations of Life.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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WAIT AND HOPE.

CHAPTER I.

Pass thou onwards—be as not :

Voice of passion and of power
Never sunk in dust forgot ;
Nature's self, as man, doth crave
Resurrection from the grave !

Though thy slumber none shall waken,

Though thy races fade like grass,
Though earth's kingdoms shall be shaken,
Thy existence shall not pass.

Rain Prints.

“ A ONCE intimate college friend with whom
I had corresponded prayed me to accompany
him in his travels to the South. I had long
felt conscious, although scarcely daring to

own it to myself, that my mental faculties had become painfully sensible to the slightest impressions. I felt as if the strings of the framework were jarred, either from natural causes, or from anxiety, over-work, and over watchfulness. The request then came to me as to the ears of a prisoner who, confined in his cell, is suddenly called on to breathe the free air of his native hills.

“‘And this journey,’ I said to my mother in the elation of my heart, ‘will restore to me the tone of health which never ought to have been shaken.’

“I felt as if it were an invitation to return to my native land, for what scholar ever yet, impregnated with the spirit of that which he had read, but sighed to see Italian ground—nor felt that it was the

Mecca of pilgrimage to every heart
Whose feeling is religion.

“We turned southward, I with an ardour and enthusiasm which I scarcely dared confess to my soberer friend, lest he might question my judgment, or rather sanity, and he as a man who must make the grand tour for his own credit's sake. But the relapse too soon followed, and depression of spirit, which my friend wished me to think was unperceived by him. I had opened my full heart to him during our travel, and I had endeavoured to infuse him with something of my own enthusiasm.

“I know not whether I had inhaled the seeds of fever while crossing the Pontine,—unfortunately after sunset,—but our arrival at the inn of Terracina formed a date-day in my life. I seemed to live ages in those hours.

“My friend, exhausted by the journey, retired to rest on his arrival at the house, which was situated on the sea-shore.

“I, on the contrary, who ought to have been the fatigued, was bounding with animation. I felt pulsed with strength, and an energy that could find relief only in the effusion of its sensations.

“While unobserved, I hurried to the waters that I heard breaking on the beach behind the inn, until I stood upon a waste space of sand, hidden by low crags that were strewn around me.

“And there, for the first time, I saw the deep-toned waters of the Mediterranean breaking at my feet; there was a joy and a music in their voices, such as I have never since heard, such as I can never hope to hear again. I stood there and I felt a portion of the gladness I looked upon.

“I have dwelt on that desolate yet lovely shore, because it was thereon I received my first impression of aspiration, I may add, of

inspiration, that the air of Italy infuses into her first comers. How I rallied as I advanced, how the spirits of the past at Rome, at Naples, and above all, at Pæstum, rise like giants from their monuments, imparting their strength to their beholders, I need not dwell on.

“Even now the brief tale verges towards its close,” Julian added to him whose eyes had not been drawn a moment from the speaker from its commencement.

“I returned home to find that my mother had received her mandate of departure. I was left in the world alone.

“I came to London—not again to fight a losing game by standing in shadow, but to present myself to those with whom I had corresponded ; to become a living man among the living.

“My first object was to gain some little notoriety, or, to use the more ordinary phrase,

to push my way in the world, which is to submit to the weights and usages of life without being prostrated by them,—to wear the iron mask, and become one of the material roll.

“A few episodes from my history I have yet to tell. During hours taken from deeper occupation, I had attempted lyric verses for music. I resolved on making a visit to a well-known and fashionable cantatrice. I thought, while on my way, that it would be safer to introduce myself, first, to a music publisher, that he might prepare for me, or forestall the way.

“He received me with the usual trade civility of one who builds on expectancy. I opened the case to him; he glanced over the opening words, and, as a matter of course, judged the whole.

“‘Words,’ he said, ‘however excellent, were but words, after all.’

“It was clear to him that the singer called them ‘words,’ and not poetry, as not caring a farthing whether their texture were of brass or gold. What they, and indeed he, wanted, was so many pegs, whereon to hang the fashions and the fantasies of beautiful music. ‘That was all words, of any kind, were good for; who ever heard or comprehended all the words of an ordinary song? The singer might have given them in any tongue, Greek or Hebrew; but what in the crowded room they *did* comprehend,—what they did applaud,—what *ecstasied* them—might he be permitted to coin a word?—into raptures—was the expression of the passions of love or jealousy,—realities given to them by substantial music, of which the words conveyed but the faintest shadow. Words, in short, until married to music, were impotent; and when allied together, the most they could claim was to show

off, as he had just said, the glory of that substance of which they were the shadows. Now, apropos of that,' he continued, while carelessly turning over the songs, and observing they were nine, 'I do happen to have by me some original music of my own, which, I think, these words would exactly suit. They only wait, indeed, for marriage with the nine Muses. They are, in fact, lying among my drawers, like so many beautiful flowers; or, if I may be allowed to say it, lovelier female forms, "wasting their sweetness" on drawers closed, having no "desert air," or indeed, "air" of any kind. Now, I suppose, I need hardly add,' he carelessly continued, in that vein of self-sufficiency which is interesting to see because you know the speaker is a believer, 'I need hardly apprize you that *my* music is music. I lay the strongest emphasis on the distinction; because other music is *not*.

“‘Respecting the things that are called “ballads”—of which we have our monthly thousands—it is a mere byword that the most mournful and sullen sounds of the waves along our shores are not more dreary, uniform, and monotonous. Nor will we enlarge on Scottish effusions, cold and stark in their undeveloped tongue, excepting to observe that they are invested with a species of galvanic vitality—music in the act of skipping, bird-like, from bush to bush—music in a state of antithesis—in short, where each note, in an elation of playful excitement, endeavours, by abrupt saltation, to spring up and overtake the other. We are still barbarians in high art. We rush to the operas, and spend enough money on them, and over those eternal “Morning Concerts,” to feed half the armies of Europe. We pave the steps of our great singers over here, and we maintain them

with our gold. Where are our own composers, and how do they succeed, save by the puffings and *encores* of their coterie?

“‘Now my name is ubiquitous; as the French king formerly said: “I am the State.” I have resurrectionized the almost buried soul of harmony. But what is the use of words? I can put you in the right track for success; for you have, by a rare stroke of fortune, alighted at the right inn. Take this music and your words, and call on Miss Treble. You are sure of finding her at home at this hour. She is your cynosure and polar star. She screams a little now and then, but she is really a fine singer, and, above all, she is fashionable. If she sings one of your songs in public, you are a made man. For the rest,’ he added, carelessly, and by way of postscript, ‘we can easily go snacks on our mutual profit.’

CHAPTER II.

And her fingers, wandering, wind-like, on those wires,
gave a tone,
As if their fine life and feeling, answering, blended
with her own.

The Festal Song.

“FULL of the usual golden hopes and far-seen
successes vistaing into the bright future, ever
opening and closing on the unfatigued,
because still hopeful, mind, I found myself at
the door of the celebrated songstress exactly
as the clock was sounding out the eleventh
hour.

“I felt so confident of my success, confirmed as I was by my publisher (although he reminded me rather uncomfortably of Parolles), that I knocked at the door as one having authority. I have observed that every knock on the street-door takes its peculiar expression from the hand that tempers it. Who feels not the knock of success, of haste, of pomposity, and who also recognises not the single and sullen memorial of the dun ?

“I heard from without the voice and the piano of the cantatrice suddenly cease in fullest practice ; a dead silence followed my reverberation on the door.

“A startled-looking damsel hurried to open it. I mentioned the well-known name of my publisher. Still she regarded me somewhat doubtfully—I might say distrustfully—holding her door ajar. Glancing from my face to

my hand, she saw that I held therein a roll of paper. The intimation evidently spoke of business, and was understood.

“ ‘Missus is hard at her work just now, sir; that I *do* know; but I will say at once that a gentleman wants her.’

“ And before I could arrest her, to qualify, and somewhat to modify, her very pronounced language with respect to myself, she was in the drawing-room.

“ ‘Don’t you see that I *am* at home, cuckoo?’ said a sharp and rather angry voice, replying to her intimation.

“ I was shown into a small withdrawing-room, the larger portion of which was occupied by the piano. What space remained was intruded on by a superabundant display of Chinese crockery. That which could find no place on the tables was crowded at their feet, to the effect that I picked my way with

apprehension to a chair. The cantatrice appeared suddenly so occupied in attending to heaps of notes piled before her that she scarcely raised her head at my entrance.

“Her figure was of unusual dimensions, magnified by a crinoline which appeared, to my unscientific eyes, preposterously circumfluent, even for her. It surged around her like a whirlpool.

“‘I trust,’ I said at last, breaking a silence which I saw she had no intention of doing herself, but which I felt awkward, ‘that I do not disarrange you?’

“‘O, dear me,’ she replied, abruptly, while laughing and laying aside her pen, ‘don’t I like that? Why, of course, I love, I mean to say I like, disarrangements, as you daintily call them,’ regarding the roll in my hand, ‘when I see business in them. Songs, I see!’ receiving the enclosure ‘as a matter of

course, and the music by Mr. Twang. I have a horror of his mannerism; you know he is the veritable *toujours perdrix*, always the same hash, as we should say. How he manages to go down with the public does astonish me; but as they can swallow anything, and digest it too, why should not I? 'Tis their affair, not mine. Of course you wish *me* to sing them?' glancing at me interrogatively, and then referring to the first lines.

" 'I shall, indeed, feel gratified and flattered,' I began, rather confusedly, from her abrupt manner.

" 'Oh, of course! Well, I will do so; I shall be charmed—charmed,' she said, reiterating the word.

" 'And so shall I,' was my mental reflection. 'What could the publisher mean by hinting that she was close?' I added to myself, while

scrutinizing her broad and open, but very homely, features. I had never seen a more frank woman. I then said aloud, in full earnestness :—

“ ‘I really do not know how to express my feeling to you for the warmth—’

“ ‘You see,’ she said, without taking the remotest notice of my remark, which indeed she did not hear, ‘you know, of course—as everyone *does* know—that for me to take a song in hand is to establish its character. The song becomes mine, I mean to say, emphatically *mine*.’

“ ‘I bowed to what I knew to be the truth : she continued,—

“ ‘You see, I make it mine, inasmuch as it is at once associated with my name, and becomes for the time a part of myself. The very root and blossom of its success are planted in the room, so to speak, even while I am

singing it. Why, for instance, do tens of thousands of songs die unheard and unknown? Because no public singer takes them in hand; besides,' she added, seeing my countenance brighten, 'I can always, if I like, command an *encore*, and then, you know, you are doubly done. I like the words, too, all about loves, and sighs, and wishes, I see, and so forth; and that I like, of course I do, for, after all said and done, a song *must* have a bit of sentiment.'

" 'I really do feel,' I exclaimed, 'so excessively grateful to you that I cannot express my sense of—'

" 'Well,' she said, putting the sheets on the table, not hearing a syllable of what I said, 'of course, you and he will be great gainers. But I never like to press a hard bargain on anyone, least of all, on a young man like yourself. You are making your first steps in

this bustling, horrid old world, and you do not appear too strong. To you, then, looking also at your introducer, for I can waste no more time, having fifty things to do, I would name my lowest price for singing one of your songs, say, at twenty guineas.'

"'Twenty pounds!' I exclaimed, mute with surprise from saying more.

"'No—guineas, young man, if *you* please,' she said, resuming her occupation. 'I imitate others there. *I* cling to the old fashioned, honest, fat-looking guinea, and I will have its full value. The sum I have named to you is such an apology that it hardly likes to name itself. You will make twenty times the amount by the spell and magic of my name. Of course, you know, I claim a per-centage, besides, on every copy that is sold.'

"Abruptly and rudely I was awakened from my dream. I confess that, although a female, I

felt something like revulsion at her callousness. I afterwards learned that she was the daughter of a Jew—all great singers are Hebrew; and in her sentiments she did not belie her ancestry.

“‘If you like it,’ she abruptly added, seeing that I was about to rise, ‘if you like to write verses for me, I can set them, you know, to music of my own, that is, if I find them vocal. Since the death of Moore, the art of song-writing seems to have died away—not a creature has an idea of it. The announcing line of songs of the day, when advertised, is often given in bad English. I don’t doubt but yours are different; besides, you look as if you could do the thing. You see, we could then share profits together; the per-centage, of course, as I have said, being mine.’

“I left the room silently, and with no re-

joinder. I saw that all expression of natural courtesy was thrown away; indeed, she did not appear to hear me rise and open the door, absorbed in her speculations before her.

“As I walked pensively along the street, I thought to myself, ‘What a mere mechanical perfection is the finish of a fine singer! While that voice of hers—and I had often listened to it with rapture—is thrilling through my frame, and inspiring me with the noblest emotions which our natures are capable of receiving, she is little more than the material instrument. She knows not—she has not an idea of that penetrating influence of her tones—of that exquisite harmony *she* pours forth, and which *we* infuse with a soul and spirit of our own. She, in the meanwhile, is probably, while singing, “counting out” her audience, or speculating on her terms for the evening, or revelling, with her mental eyes, on the supper

that floats before her, when the hour of her public school-work is over.'

"I resolved, while my spirit was inured to disappointment, that I would pay a long-promised visit to the editor of a certain journal. The few articles which I had supplied to it had met with his accorded praise; the best position was given to them, a point less flattering because I felt that I had conscientiously merited the distinction. I had done that which the critic of our day rarely or ever consummates, I had read the works *through* which had been committed to me; and I had given to them, however erring, liberal and, as I felt, just awards.

"I thought, therefore, that something more should be given to them than golden opinions, which perhaps might be recalled to him by my personal appearance. I remembered, as I walked along, that, from the highest in the realm to

the lowest artizan, each claimed and expected that which is demanded and expected by the daily labourer, 'a fair day's wages for a fair day's work!' I wished to hear the editor's sentiments on the matter, that I might no longer spend my strength on thin air.

"I found him in the smallest possible room, it may rather have been termed a large box, pierced with one oval window, like an eye, to admit the necessary light and air. Exactly in the centre a small table was placed, filling up the space. The editor occupied a chair on one side, and on the opposite, close to the wall, another was placed, which the visitor, for whom it was designed, might reach by compressing himself within the extreme passage required. On the opposite narrow door was traced, in large white letters, 'Nulla dies sine lineâ.'

"On hastily raising his head from the work

before him, I thought that he appeared slightly surprised at my unexpected advent, which I considered an ill omen.

“I preluded that I had been gratified to perceive that the essays I had sent him received his good opinion, from the position they had attained.

“He nodded assent, yet the nod smacked something of Malvolio.

“‘Generally speaking,’ he incisively remarked, ‘I found them very good.’

“‘I thought, therefore,’ I continued, passing by his qualified rejoinder, ‘that, perhaps, something of a substantial value might be attached to them.’

“He regarded me with an expression of austere surprise, and shook back his curls with the nod of Jove, as he replied.

“I ought to have premised that his appearance was remarkable. He reminded me

somewhat of the portraits of Mirabeau. Features, originally prepossessing and irregular, had been scarified and ploughed up by the small-pox, until nothing but furrows and rough edges and indentures remained. The vision and the expression of the eyes, as a matter of course, were injured and weakened; but, like Samson, his strength and noticeable appearance rested much in his hair, which displayed an affluence of natural curl. The effect of its redundancy was that it imparted an undue size to the head, which contrasted ill with his spare and attenuated figure. The sword appeared to have acted on the sheath until it was well nigh worn away.

“ While he was addressing me, a gleam of sunshine found its way into the room, and illumining his auburn locks, his head appeared for the while in a blazing flame.

“ ‘ I thought,’ he replied, assuming a sudden

courtesy of manner which was hard and unnatural, and which did not suit him, 'I flattered myself that the position which I accorded to your papers indicated the value I attached to them; for the rest,' he added, 'I remunerate none—I use the term in its worldly sense—for why? I consider it as the greatest remuneration, that a rising author should attack the public under my banner. Who is more known than myself? and what course have I not attempted and succeeded in? Take what you like: history, novel, verse, poetic prose, science, memoirs, anything and everything awakening and ambitious has been attempted by me. And then, in common with 'the retreat of the ten thousand,' I mean with that large band of authors who write anonymously, retreated, as it were, in their march from public observation, what reams of information have I not poured forth without a name? Why, I have

penned sufficient to set up the reputation of fifty authors, at least. Surely, then, you could not expect such as myself to pay my staff for teaching them how to conquer under my banner, thus disciplining them to a style that shall become its own reward? My company, sir,' he continued, 'is composed of the free lances of literature, armed all in proof,' and they who would win their golden spurs in the fields of my journal must find them in the applause of their leader.'

"I had already discovered that there is no wiser and finer point to attain in our ordinary intercourse of life than in humouring and allowing for the little vanities of a talented man. You gratify him, and at the same time you gratify yourself, for you acquire a friend thereby, so far as he can be one, consistent with his character.

"I confess to a sensible pleasure in seeing

any human being made contented with himself, no matter how small or how large be the incentive he requires. If I can persuade him he is that which he believes himself to be, shall I petulantly withhold the aliment he loves, while at the same time I give him the spur of emulation? He feels more confirmed in his seat by praise; he will take more pains to retain the position of which he is thus made less doubtful. If, on the contrary, I snatch away the stirrup, and deride or envy his career, what is my feeling?—that I am smaller than he. He is also irritated in vain; for, whenever did prohibition fall kindly on the young author's ear?—how then could it be made grateful to the old?'

"We parted with mutual expressions of respect; I knew that my own were sincere, yet I was conscious that each of us wore the mask of conventionalism. I felt that I had declined to

sow further seed without a prospect of harvest; and, I fear he could not forgive 'the free lance' which forsook him. His motto was evidently that of our friend Pistol, 'base is the slave that pays!'

"I was conscious of the pressure of the hand which he gave me at our parting, but I saw also that the eye was averted from me—that certain test of human insincerity, which man shows in common with the angry animal.

"I was now at a loss as to what course I should pursue. I felt that I was unknown to the great public, that I had really effected nothing; that no effort of mine, however elaborated, could secure a critical friend to assert my claims in some influential journal; that I should never succeed until I had gained the advice or assistance of some experienced leader.

"While passing a by-street that opened on

one of the principal squares, I was so absorbed in my meditations that I did not regard a man of large bulk and stature immediately preceding me.

“I observed that his gait became unsettled, even to staggering. I watched him more narrowly. Receding suddenly from the pavement, he grasped at the iron railings, and he had certainly met a heavy fall, had I not rushed forward, receiving his weight on my shoulder; but it required all my efforts to withhold him.

“‘I thank you,’ he said, grasping me by the arm; ‘I really thank you, sir. I should have fallen, from a giddiness to which I am subject, had it not been for your timely and kindly aid. Carry on the obligation; yonder is my house,’ pointing it from the railing; ‘just ring the bell, and direct my servant here; he knows exactly how to act with me.’”

“I did so, after carefully staying him against the rail. An elderly servant appeared, and gave to the master his support.

“‘I am not able to thank you as I ought,’ he said, ‘but do call on me to-morrow; say two of the clock. I shall then be myself again, and really glad to welcome you. I fancy that I have met you somewhere before. I am sure I recognize your face. Do come. I am like the snail; you are sure of finding me at home, for I hate all exercise. I consider human legs (at least, my own) as jointed stilts, only made to put the body in uneasy motion.’

“And thus speaking, while cordially taking my hand, I saw him safe within his house.”

CHAPTER III.

He mocked the passions that he magnified,
As if their strength essayed, he felt a triumph
In levelling idols he had served.

Life's Episode.

• “I RESOLVED to hold my engagement on the following morning, less from the idea of gaining any advancement in my path than from my desire to look into the character of him who had invited me.

“While passing through the over-ornamented entrance-hall, I felt that he would

form an exception to the rule that the house reflects the character of its inmate.

“An air of gaudiness and tawdriness pervaded everything. Every requisite of furniture, or ornament, was in its place, the house was furnished even to profuseness; but nothing looked at ease. A certain brightness of colour thrown from curtains, paper, table-cloths, and consoles, gave the impression of a want of repose. The eye felt something of injury from the confusing and bewildering mixture of contrasting colours. Nor on the walls, curtains, or carpet could it find a resting-place. The apartment conveyed the impression of a newly-painted toy-shop, where the most attractive articles are displayed to catch the eye. It had also the one prevailing fault of all English saloons—it was overcrowded with furniture.

“He was seated at a small table, drawn

up near a side window, which, darkened by a green curtain, threw a quieter light over a pile of volumes heaped up around him.

“His reception was cordial; there was a certain raciness in his manner which dispensed with conventionalism. Having previously ascertained the well-known name of Mr. Thwackum from the servant, I began by congratulating him on the ease with which he had acquired popularity, on the success, as it appeared to me, of a single work.

“He threw himself back in his arm-chair, and laughed until the room rang again:—

“‘My dear friend, you are indeed verdant, a very neophyte, I see, in the arts of our trade; you do want some little enlightenment on things in general. You half saved my life yesterday, for a fall, to a man of my size, would be as portentous to me as to our friend Jack Falstaff. I am bound,

therefore, as the Methodists say, “to speak out my experience,” as a slight return. Why, I have been a whole age in climbing up the tree! *Up* it, indeed!—I like that phrase, when the very best of us are always going *down* it—at least our dear friends take care to tell us so; and you may see, as well as read, that I too have a kind of “alacrity in sinking!” Why, sir, before my hair thought of changing its colour from the prettiest auburn to a modest white, I had expended a fortune in the art of sinking—that is to say—of printing and publishing.

“There was nothing I did not try my hand on: tales, essays, plays, farces—tom-fooleries of all kinds—all of which, mark you, like a thorough greenhorn, I thought superfine. The ears of Midas, however carefully hidden, are nailed to every

scull until it is grey ; and well, even then, if they fall off. Yet nothing really brought grist to my mill. Away the cost of print and paper went from my pockets—away the sheets flew to the trunk-makers. There was scarcely an unfortunate publisher whom I did not torment—I believed that each held the key of success. I blamed them not for my failings, for I found them honourable men. They confided to their clerks, they to advertising offices, and with what effect we have all more or less experienced.

“ At length, after wading through difficulties, resembling those of our friend Satan on his exit from Pandemonium—that is to say, the printing-house,—I contrived to finish *a* novel. I thought nothing of it then—I think less of it now ; yet what with pictures garnishing its bright green coverlets, and what with letters of the alphabet twisted into

grotesque forms and shapes fantastic; what with friends pledged to aid me, and an article in a leading journal appearing on a Saturday, to unite the benefit of two days, I did accomplish the feat of making it—sell! The thing was then done. I went into my study, locked the door, and shouted out, “eureka!” I felt I had vaulted at once into the saddle of success. I knew that I might then scribble exactly as I chose—that I might each week cover half-an-acre of paper, manured with the most unmitigable rubbish—that nothing could overthrow me.’

“‘I wish,’ I said, earnestly, ‘if I may take the liberty of interrupting you, that you could throw to me, from your book of knowledge, one leaf to guide me to the path of success. I should not ask you, were not my boat among the breakers.’

“He answered in the like tone :—

“‘If you really ask me how to succeed best in what is termed literary life, where every man you meet is the ‘author’ of something, where you can enter no saloon without finding an authoress, I should recommend, supposing that once in your life you have read “The Faery Queen,” to adopt for your crest the motto of Sansfoy—“Be bold!” By this boldness, observe, I mean “the perseverance that keeps honour bright,” using the opening line of the grandest passage in Shakespeare, for perseverance at last overcomes all obstacles; talent walks first; I put genius out of the question, as *that* faculty never compromises itself, but perseverance immediately follows it: they are one, the substance and the shadow.

“‘I have been said,’ he added, laughingly, ‘to possess some small amount of these

“ ‘But,’ I observed, ‘too many of these become failures.’

“ ‘Because they are not worth the price demanded. Look at the coarseness of type, style, and matter. To please the eye in these small matters is half the battle. No page in journal, novel, or poem should resemble a Devonshire lane; let the light of space and gaps of blue sky break frequently on the pages. Gain, if you can, some kind critical friend. If you have delicacy on the point, and all beginners are conscientious, ask yourself what puffing is?

“ ‘Say that my friend reviews my book? He has too much self-respect to deal in open flatteries. He may use warm colouring; but this is a set-off against the acidities which are sure to follow, for we all know that the benefit which eulogy effects is as nothing when weighed against the envy it causes. Detraction follows praise like its shadow, on the

leaves of journals, as on the hearts of those we meet in society.

“ ‘ Suppose that we could have the opinions of most of our acquaintance on us immediately the drawing-room door had closed? I take it that we should feel heart-sick of life and of everything else. In what circle that we left behind us should we not leave some dear Mrs. Candour or Sir Benjamin Backbite, who, while standing up in our defence, would not carefully expose our foibles? Even the critic who lauds too often ends by placing one of his hoofs in the milk-pail he has given you; he thinks it a point of duty to end by finding fault; he must qualify it with water until he neutralises the good he has done. Regard all classes, all positions, from the Minister, whipping up his touters, to the stage manager, recording his deeds in the journal, and say if all do not progress by puffing? Why, the puffings of the author are

as mere feathers in the scale of comparison ; yet look at the risks *he* runs in pursuit of a phantom !—look at the sloughs of despond he wades through, or wherein he too often sinks—look at the slow and painful ascent, the certain and Sisyphean recoil, and then contemplate the fortune-crowned scribbler—he who counts on his thousands for each novel, who covers his half-acre of paper daily, who wins his position when the intellectual Titans have failed. What is the tale they have to tell?—the cost of print and paper, the descent into the coffins of the press, the ordeal of fabulous advertisements. These, following the resurrection of their spiritual part into the narrow heaven of some fair lady's trunk, where, their feelings and thoughts recorded may be innocently wandering round some crinoline or flowered petticoat—too happy in being so deposited,

previous to their penal suffering in the annihilating fire. But when you really succeed in emerging from the ranks (which you will do if you live, for I see it in your forehead), take my advice: select the best tales you have written, and try your hand as a public reader. Public reading will end in becoming a universal fashion.

“‘You will feel some natural scruples at first—I mean as to the real worth of what you read—whether there are not among your audience those who could write better English, and with far more depth and point than yourself. But you must begin with inducing your brazen armour, because, if you wait for the golden panoply in exchange, you might not appear at all. Advertise yourself at moderate fares if you would fill the train; prefer for awhile suburbs to the city, till your face is acclimatized to the eyed audience.

Recite and articulate with vehemence until you alarm the very door-keeper. Be odd and eccentric in something—no matter what—only be so, and you catch the genuine Saxon whom Shakespeare, in Hamlet, nailed to his canvas for ever.

“ ‘ When you come to the fits of remorse in your tale, look the man of feeling, be full of passion and agony, and thus carry with you the softer sex ; without them an author can do nothing now-a-days, or in poetry, or in prose ; whether in lecture-rooms or in churches, they make a third of the audience. Keep yourself, in a word, before the public eye as a public actor, although acting before a desk, and with the blessing of having nothing to learn. The stage and the audience you have to yourself, where none may hiss or encore you. Touching the dignity of the literary character being lowered thereby, what is that to you ?

You have made yourself one of the "nation of shopkeepers," and you have as much right to re-sell the produce of your mind as the tradesman has to retail his goods. They advertise their names over their doors and ticket their shop-windows, silently affixing à certain value to certain articles, whose exact worth they know well. You do precisely the same thing with your books. They have been sold, and probably read by full half your audience; therefore the major part scarcely care to hear them again. But what they do come for is, to see the novelty of a man who can read aloud his own productions, instead of hiring some one to do it for him; also to see "what kind of a man he is," and whether he looks like his works, which he does invariably. You are free to wander about like our friend the muffin-man; the object of the one is to sell his muffins by crying them aloud;

that of the other, his books by reciting them aloud; both act for one sole aim—money. With your bell for your advertisement, you can recite them when and where you like. In a word, if you could retain for awhile, on the retina of the Anglo-Saxon eye, an indistinct vision of yourself among the bewildering galaxy of authors, let your reputation be held up before it, as the face of Bardolph was to Falstaff on the night at Gadshill, when, by personal exertion inflaming its fiery excrescences, it resembled “an everlasting bonfire.” Let your journal be raised for your sign-post, but let its finger point to your door, thus keeping your direction before the eyes of the changeful multitude, ever on the look-out for novelty and the coming man. Carefully attach to it your name, to the effect that whatever is good therein will pertain to yourself, and whatever of the husk and rind, to the anonymous and unknown.

“ ‘Take, as one sole rule and guide of your life, and daily recite it to yourself, as I have done through a quarter of a century, the grandest passage even in Shakespeare—the remonstrance of Ulysses to Achilles, wherein is concentrated the wisdom of the universe.

“ ‘But,’ he added, glancing at me with the same puzzling expression, between joke and earnest, rendering it impossible to know in which vein he spoke, ‘it is a pity you are so young. Now, if you could have been some twenty years older, an established married man, for instance, one might associate your name with some domestic convulsion. Some pet misery might have been attached to you; something of the romantic. Ancestral race is written in your face, but you should have had the family title also. Why, the story of *Childe Harold* was half the making of its renown, in despite of its marvellous genius.

Gossip clung to the skirts of the Childe, and, like Potiphar's wife, she would not let them go; the whole sex went after him, to a woman. Young ladies innumerable fell into hysterics while singing "Fare thee well, and if for ever," &c., to the divine air of "Ah Perdonna." Young men frequented gloomy haunts in opened shirt-collars, catching death by quinsied sore-throat, forgetting that the Childe sported his fine neck under Oriental skies, not among damp and sloppy mists. The young poets took to dram-drinking, and of course became spasmodic. The joke of Don Juan filled them with horror: "I leave them to their daily tea is ready." In a word, gloomy looks and dagger-gleaming eyes were at a premium. Scott himself, for awhile, was at discount; he looked round the house, he saw his emptying benches, and he fell back on his immortal novels.

“ ‘ It was ever thus with us. Shakspeare records that, the more to resemble Hotspur, “speaking thick became the accents of the valiant.” Fashion clings to the one who suits her, no matter if he be a composition of porcelain or of brass, she shuts the door against the faces of giants. The Childe also had the advantage of being read *through*, an honour rarely or never given to a poet now-a-days. Few critics, however sharp-edged be the lances of their pens, care to penetrate beyond the first bull-hide of an author’s seven-fold shield. Whenever did John Bull appreciate a great imaginative poet, until the name had been hammered at till forced into his skull, after the pommelings of something like a quarter of a century; the ill-starred man having, in the last meanwhile, found his resting-place.

“ ‘ I don’t often quote poetry, but

The neglect that wastes the heart,
Withering the young growths of hope;
The faith mighty that could cope

Through a life against despair,
Sleeplessly contending there ;
The forgetfulness that falls,
Dropping, ice-like, from the walls
Of its prison, till the flame
Answerless and dead became,—
These are felt by him no more ;
Life's last coil with him is o'er !

“ ‘ Thus sang one who seems to have
thought not lightly of the matter.

“ ‘ Recurring to yourself. I would have had
you married ; I would have had half-a-dozen
olive branches clinging to your coat-tails.’

“ ‘ I interrupted him :—

“ ‘ Pray instruct me how that circumstance
could possibly improve my position ?’

“ ‘ Exactly as it helped the Childe. Men,
you know, especially Englishmen, are ever-
lastingly quarreling with their wives—the
“weaker sex,” of course, being thrust to
the wall. Now, you should have done the
same, taking care to make it public, if not

in verse, as he did, in prose. Act so at home that a volcanic explosion must ensue—the finest and quickest fuel is jealousy; get it well up, and the thing is done. Your better self vows that she will not live with you; this is just what you want. Appeal to prose, to friends, heaven, earth, and the whole public world, to the fact that the innocent babe, within a month of its birth, is a black-amoor in its innocence compared to yourself. The world, being advised of the affair, condemn, pity, and forget; most of them might have been unaware you had wife or children till you informed them of the fact—so that piece of information is gained. Of course, you must remember that an untitled man, and in an inferior position of life, draws a lesser share of interest. No one cares about the history of nobodies, for the middle classes of England are intensely aristocratic.

“ ‘Your great object is, then, to make yourself somebody ; to do, not to say. It is a hurrying-on age, each day of which is filled with its own excitement. Each man, literary or political, anybody or nobody, alike struggles toward the one point. They have no time to dwell on anything : to do so, would be to place themselves behind their time ; in those minutes, the race and the prize would be lost. As a good mode for notoriety, assert your claim to some eminent public position for which, by habit and education, you are wholly unsuited. People may laugh at you for the moment, but they will forget your presumption in the next, setting down as the fact, that the attempt showed “pluck” at any rate ; and where lives the John Bull who venerates not that most clear and explanatory phrase ? To have pluck, in his bluff eyes, is to have everything—it is to possess a living soul !

“ ‘Recurring to wives,—if you happen to be accommodated with one, and are dying to be divorced from her, do not attack her publicly; for then, the plebeian blood appears and settles the perpetrator for ever. There are certain things which a gentleman, however morally degraded he be, cannot do—to attack his wife in the public prints is one of them. Repose rather on the elegiac side of the question. Indite as many exquisite “fare-theewells” as you can manage. Attract the public’s sympathies—if they have any, or care one rush for you or your wife—but do not revolt them with the tongue or pen of the scavenger. Even John Bull, bluff and rough as he is, has a strong idea of “standing up” for a woman, especially when, to use his sovereign phrase on such occasions, he considers her to be “put upon.”

“ ‘If you make a dead set at authorship,

and are resolved to become a popular novelist, —I mean if you want money, and who does not?—write for popularity.

“ ‘ Now, there is one peculiar style, causing no trouble, and which always takes, beyond even the moral novel woven from the home-spun of humble life. It may be termed the fast style, written, of course, by a fast man —no other would have a chance of doing it properly. You must be a kind of Sardanapalus—cast in copper. Like that worthy, you must have tried and become tired of everything and everybody. You must also be “up” to everything and everybody—one must use the phrase of these men to explain themselves.

“ ‘ Nothing on this earth, or beyond it, must cause you the shadow of surprise. You must have a given reason to account for everything. You must survey the dry, dusty race-

course of life with the hard eyes of an experienced jockey, making allowances for every accident, understanding every human "dodge," and forgiving everything, excepting greenness, or credulity, or mental verdancies or redundancies of any possible kind. Like the genuine French *gamin*, you must have your *connu* ready for everything. In a word, the air of a knowing man must be endorsed on every page you indite, pervading each like a wholesome atmosphere.

"If you have to "do" a bit of sentiment, or write up a situation, or find the words for any incidental passion that must be expressed, you have but to choose from the stereotyped phrase which every novel-reader expects—and no other. Recollect also that, at the moment you are picking and culling from their flowers of rhetoric, a score of others are similarly employed, and all with the same excellent result.

“ ‘Whether, therefore, a bit of the sentimental or of the revolting is to be done, “proper words in proper places” do still abound. You must be like one standing on the stage, behind the dingy, tallowy side scenes, and you must have a stale kind of joke for everything. The signet of a know everything cleverness must be stamped on each sentiment you express: the phrases of the field, turf, or ring must be at your fingers’ ends, setting aside the mysterious vocabulary of slang.

“ ‘Cleverness is the one word and thing required; in having it, you grasp the *To καλον* and you may “continually cry” *εὕρηκα*, the haven is won, the work is done: do your two novels a-year, and be crowned. As to your heroines (which I forgot) who ever thinks of finishing such sketches? As a rule make her as unlike a living woman as you possibly can, and you will be close on the mark of excel-

lence. Some fast-going critic will, it is to be hoped, rise up enraptured with your style and originality. The mawkish effusions of slower coaches will be ignored and floored; the elder birds will be summarily hurled down from the branches where they have been roosting too long, and you will be elevated in triumph, for the hour, to the top of the windy tree.

“ ‘ But, recurring to the peer, that poet of leading genius was heard to the word’s echo. The Childe, who dared to revel and to confess the satiety of pleasure, instead of skulking his vice and denying the truth (thus making, while knowing himself to be, a liar), commanded respect and interest by its very confession. The higher and more polished the society, the more they appreciated him. The man of inferior material may also make himself a public mark of interest with thousands; but the wrongs of the one are

discussed in gilded saloons among sympathetic murmurs of the refined; the pros and cons of the others are discussed, perhaps with more sincerity and gusto, over cakes and porter.

“ ‘And now, I think that I have threaded many of the mazes, infinitesimal turnings and shiftings that take place behind the scenes while the audience contemplate the spectacle in front; the solemn farce of life, which is made up of little things, where the great never occur.

“ ‘Life, my friend,’ he added, after a pause ‘is grand only in the distance, and to the eyes of reflective men.

“ ‘As the hills are azured with tones that are borrowed from the eye that loves them, as the fields in the distance present grace and beauty, so appears the world to those who live isolated from it. Approach these eminences,

they are repellent rather than attractive ; you must climb, and you must stoop also, to ascend them. The more levelled positions have their paths and their sequestered nooks, known to the few, but he who intrudes on them uninvited shall find the hedges blocked up, the gates closed, the wall spiked, and a narrow pathway left open—simply because it could not with decency be closed.

“ ‘Yet—as you have interested me—let me, too, be selfish. Let me turn to personalities, that is to say, let me turn to my real self,’ he added, with a manner wholly changed, and like one who, at last, spake in earnest. ‘I should like you to know something of me as I am—I mean from behind the flesh-mask. In ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the poet utters the truth when he observes that :—

Never were two minds, stream-like joined in one,
The straws above, and secret depths revealed.
Man never yet confessed his soul, or raised
The layers of self-love, crusting round his heart
To hide its nakedness from God and man !

Yet there are exceptions forming the rule—I
am one of them.'

CHAPTER IV.

Mon expérience, mes erreurs, mes fautes mêmes ont épuré mon cœur, l'ont affermi dans ses principes, et m'ont éclairé davantage sur la dignité de ma nature, et sur le but de mon existence.—AGATHON.

“ ‘ I REGARDED him with increasing interest, but I remained silent, and he continued :—

“ ‘ I am, outwardly, one of the many who are compelled to cover reams of paper with nonsense which I despise when it is done. In a word, I have taken up a false position in life simply because I could not attain the true one.

“The most practical of all writers is he who directly or indirectly supports his country by his voice or by his pen; the rest are, more or less, imaginative men. I confess to a patriotism which is a vital principle and feeling in me, now magnified from my belief in the inevitable decline and fall of my country.’

“You surprise me; I perceive that you speak in veriest earnest.’

“My friend, let no stupid, heart-sicken-
ing, droning political talk be ours, no cant
about a “Constitution” diseased by a compli-
cation of maladies, still less on that eternal
word “reform” shouted forth from the win-
dows of a dilapidated fabric on one side, and
howled back by blind demagogues from below.

“How can either House give that which
they want themselves? What purity can flow
from clogged and corrupted sources?

“Let us then utter no rancour on the one

House of do-littles, or on the great children of the other, who meet, session after session, one and the same, to wrangle away the hours ; who profess one thing when in their schoolroom, and another when out of it, who have no healthful moral courage.

“ ‘ Nor be ours the abuse of those coroneted despots who expatriate from their lands bands of brave men, to substitute for them the more valuable grouse and deer. No attacks be ours on democrats, audacious as mendacious, who influence and lead away the ignorant.

“ ‘ Never did England need patriots as now, to protect her on the one hand from the counsels of blind democracy, and from the graspings of a selfish oligarchy on the other ; from a mobility that would disarm the land, and from impotency invested with the highest offices. Where is the power of opinion to cry aloud :—“ Place these men in posts for which

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do nothing; and the Peers assist them. Compare the destinies of nations which were warlike when under invasion. Prussia fell in a single battle. Nor mountains, nor guerillas would have saved Spain, unassisted by ourselves; gigantic Russia was saved by winter prematurely advancing; and we are a nation of shop-keepers.

“ ‘ No amount of battle ships, regulars, or militia compensates for our one sole national want—to be again indoctrinated to war; that the masses should be drilled to the use of arms in the permanent enrolment of whole legions of volunteers.

“ ‘ We have ample wealth, ampler leisure. What do we lack to man our armies and navies? courage and patriotism. We have no commanding mind to say, “This thing *shall* be done!” Among us, everything and everybody is “ limited.”

“ ‘Meanwhile, neither the ministry nor the masses feel the imminence of the danger. The twelfth hour will arrive, and with it—the man ; and when that funest day does come, it will be caused by a vacillating ministry, and the want of a commanding will.

“ ‘Meanwhile our neighbours are under a Ulyssean eye, ever watchful and wakeful ; but the crisis has not arrived.

“ ‘Having said this much, I return to the vein of Momus, for a profound philosophy sits, and is most full of thought when beside the fountains of laughter.

“ ‘We hammer on with our reasoning faculties until we have bored into the depths of the mountain ; a ridiculous mouse comes forth, and, children as we are, we stand by and shout with laughter.

“ ‘And when we look at much that is done in our high places during the larger part of the

session, we literary and literal men may be allowed to indulge in some slight ovation at our own performances. In the meanwhile, *we* satisfy the public anyhow, or we try to do so. Now let us' he said, reclining back in his chair 'try to imagine an assembly of Notables, that is to say, of do-nothings. Recollect, however,' he continued in his peculiar manner between joke and earnest, 'that I should regret to mention with a shadow of irreverence either of our Houses. Truth, you know, cannot be irrelevant if her analogies be just, although they may be lightly chosen, for truth is not only born to stand the test of ridicule, but to be amused by it.

" 'Let us try to coin an every-day scene in an imaginary house of notables, such as might occur through a third part of the session.

" 'The Peers are sitting in their chairs of ease; the Commons are, as a matter of course,

squabbling blindly as usual — little great children in their noisy school-room.

“ ‘ Lord Doodle, seeing noble lords in their places, would venture to hazard a remark, feeling diffident in making any remarks of any kind, in such a presence. Yet he would remark, as he had observed, that, as he believed the question of “Foreign Invasion” was on that night mooted in another place, he did think that in case of such an event, honourable lords could not possibly be taken by surprise. They had but to sit in their places clad in their scarlet and ermine robes, and look as he had the honour of seeing them look at that moment. The Zouavian barbarians, on entering, would then act precisely as their ancestry had acted before them, when led into the Roman Senate by Brennus ; aggression would be awed, and retire respectfully from their presence. (Hear.)

“ ‘ The Marquis of Noodle had listened with

intense interest to what had fallen from his honourable friend, if he might take the liberty of so terming him (each appeared mutually pleased); yet he would venture so far to do his duty, even while applauding his sentiments, as to remind his lordship that he was slightly out of order in alluding to what was passing in another place.

“ ‘Earl Coodle felt bound to rise, and call his noble friend himself to order. He earnestly deprecated the idea that he could add anything to the impressive historical picture which had previously been placed before them by his noble friend, for so he would venture to term him. But if he might, as it were disavowingly, suggest, he would say that he thought the addition of a roll or schedule placed in the hands of each pillar of the State as he sat, might heighten the effect of the painting, imposing as it was. (Hear, hear.)

“ ‘Such additional touches were common in statuary; every Lord Mayor held a scroll in his hand. Nor, in this instance, would his proposed adjunct be devoid of meaning; for he felt, he need not point out to the honourable lords that the schedule to which he had referred was, in fact, the rent-roll. (Hear, hear, hear.)

“ ‘He would even add that it would be found a most effective weapon, not of offence, but of defence. (Great cheering.) Encouraged by that cheer, he would say that they had only to point out to hostile leaders the vast extent of their territorial possessions and their noble manor-houses thereon, when they, receiving also, with the intimation, courteous invitations, would, as a matter of course, feel highly flattered, and would retire delightedly with their men to their private quarters.

“ ‘The Duke of Foodle, who had been em-

ployed, while listening to the debate, in caressing and fostering his chin, which was deeply embedded in the folds of a white neckcloth (the name conveying the idea of a man who *would* thus ensconce his chin), would content himself by simply, but incisively, remarking that he considered all subjects as irrelevant which were not absolutely so; and, having made that observation, he trusted that, feeling on that moment a twinge of rheumatism in his throat, he might be permitted to resume his seat.

“ ‘The Marquis of Toodle, whose name was slightly analogous to the turtle which he loved, and which was also analogous to his nature, for he was a man of peace (the quiet and the inoffensive looked out from his face), would content himself by simply remarking that he *was* a man of peace.

“ ‘He could see no reason why nations

should not assimilate like turtles, or, he would rather say, like turtle-doves when pairing; for surely the cooings of friendship and affection were more soothing to the ear than the bellicose preparations of war? He desired not to intrude on the time of noble lords, each moment of which was precious—but his voice, like that of his great Toodle ancestry, was still for peace.

“ ‘The Earl of Poodle would first assure his honourable friend, who had preceded his last noble friend—for so he took the freedom of naming him—that he considered him perfectly judicious in withholding his tongue on such an occasion, and he might add that, if an additional motive was wanted for his silence, it consisted in the fact that he himself wished to catch the ear of the House, if only for a moment.

“ ‘Indeed, if he might be permitted to say it, he was pregnant with the subject. He

considered the invasion made on himself as far more serious than any fanciful one, either from Austrian, Gaul, or Russian. The fact really was that nobody would let him alone. If in his sporting moods he even ventured to dispose of his own property, and in his own fashion, people would look over his shoulder and tell him what he ought to do, or what he might have done. Now, for his part, he really did feel that he had thoroughly acted up to his character. (Hear.) People had said—and what would they *not* say? he would ask (cheers)—that he had formed an imaginative Cabinet. Why, it was the identical thing he most desired. (Hear, hear.) He had always been an imaginative man himself; he confessed that he did prefer aërial castles to inferior potteries, and he gloried in having chosen imaginative men as his supporters. (Hear, hear.)

He was one of those of whom it might be said that, considering his unquestioned abilities (hear, hear), few men had planned more and executed less. He could persuade to anything, for he had the Ulyssean tongue,

Soft as the fleeces of descending snows.

“‘He felt proud in having blended the literary with the political; in having infused the imaginative with the real. He wished to intimate that he loved to soften the sturdy realities of truth with the graceful veils of elocution: to reveal the formation of the limbs, but not to present them in their sinewy nakedness.

“‘Recurring to the pillars of his support, he would observe that they had undergone the usual moral metamorphoses of all political life: they had submitted to the laws of nature. The Whig had developed into the Tory, and he into the Whig, by

the finest imperceptible gradations, in that same beautiful harmony of transition and of development which we recognise in the material world; for noble lords must remember that patriots and statesmen are still the rudimentary children of Nature, and swayed by the same inevitable laws. (Hear hear.)

“ ‘In finishing the picture, he might add that his proselytes were as excellent alike at a novel as at a State paper. They might, indeed, if they chose it, repose on the one, when bored to death by the other. They could guide and instruct nations, while at the same time they could amuse them. Genius, and nothing else, could effect such marvels. (Hear hear.) What more of them could their country ask—what more could they accord to her? (great cheering.)

“ ‘Lord Boodle and Oodle, who was known to be the most nervous peer in the House, here

arose. His whole existence had been passed in mixing and concocting drinks, each of them being gently tonic. His tea, taken thrice daily, was quinated. His port, which, left to itself, was excellent, suffered under his infusions of bark; to the effect that his noble friends who dined with him expressed disagreeable after-effects, of which he had a morbid and intense desire to be informed.

“It should be premised that he had been fidgeting in his seat for some minutes in playing with a miniature watch, suspended from his neck by a golden chain. Its face was encircled with diamonds; on its back was a vignette representing Cupid riding over the world—his lordship was close on his seventieth mile-stone. The watch was exquisitely finished, and French, of course. He made it a kind of boast that it “cost him exactly one thousand guineas;”—the real

value might have been half that sum—but the bowing-down jeweller well recognised his man.

“‘If, he began, in a voice whose deprecatory tone was like an apology for his own existence, if he might address noble lords at that late hour—for it wanted exactly ten minutes to seven—that being, he believed, their usual prandial hour, (hear, hear), he would take the freedom of suggesting that it did, or rather, had, happened, that on that particular morning he had invited the very reverend Bishops of Oxoodle and Exoodle, to dine with him. (Hear, hear.) Now, encouraged by that cheer, he would venture to add, that which many noble lords might know, that both these most eminent men loved a good dinner (hear, and laughter), and served up at the moment. (Cheers.) He was gratified to observe that honourable lords held the same sentiments—that all

preferred hot joints to cold ones. (Great applause.) Indeed it was a favourite sentiment of one of his episcopal friends; he might add that his usual toast was, a good dinner first, an illustrious Personage next, and Church and State, the last. (Repeated cheers and laughter.) He would therefore presume to suggest (under permission of honourable lords) that, as it lacked about one minute and three-quarters of the actual hour (hear), they do now adjourn to the eventful affair of the day. (Hear, hear.)

“‘The question was put and carried, *nem. con.* Each peer at once turned his face toward that direction wherein his mansion lay. The vision of coming dinner absorbed each mental eye, as each gravely entered into his home-driving carriage.’

“Now I really do think,” concluded Mr. Thwackum, “that without exactly indulg-

ing in such very innocent conversation, it is somewhat analogous in matter to another house I know of, so far as appertains to the interests of the country, during some three-fourths of the session.

“And now we turn from such subjects; from graver or lighter analogies, and I end, as I began—with yourself. With regard to life and its difficulties, I *have* felt, you *are* feeling, the truth: yet take a last grave suggestion or two even from me.

“Above all short-sighted errors, never degenerate into that coarsest of our insular failures, the system of what is called, ‘cutting your acquaintance.’ I term it insular, because such barbarisms are unknown abroad, where such an act would entail the exact retribution it merited. If your friend prove unworthy, let it not appear: your annoyance might console or confirm, but will not amend him. External

politeness costs you nothing, while time, the healer, may soften asperities. If, on the contrary, you are slighted, impute it to our human nature, whose name is selfishness, or to your advance in reputation, or in life—either being an offence of itself—or to any other advantage you may be supposed to possess. Your friend has sought and has found others who are more useful to him : he desires to drop you by the way, as a supernumerary. Alight and leave—but do not attack him, like a footpad. The amenities you show him when you meet and pass on the high road of society may again reunite you ; in the meanwhile, they prevent the averted look, the painful restraint, and the passing by on the other side. Life is too short and too sacred a thing to be wasted on such degrading inanities. Why should we go on buzzing and

stinging, and biting and kicking each other, to the closing hour of our existence ?

“Receive it as an axiom that of all professions the literary is the most irritable, therefore the most unjust ; it has passed into a venerable proverb. The parson acknowledges the eloquence of a brother in the pulpit ; the officer allows the genius of his leader ; the lawyer admits the more incisive intellect ; but the author fires up if any approach him in the race. If you touch, you jostle ; he feels that virtue is gone out of him, for he, too, is a genuine spiritualist, peradventure a rapper, not only on tables, but knuckles. He is also the sincerest of self-impostors—he believes in the fantasies he has created.

“If you visit, you bore, for you snatch his time from his hands ; if you neglect, you slight him. If you would retain, preserve a cautious distance : good-naturedly humour

the delusions of Malvolio: they do you no injury. Know your place, as he desires you should know his; receive his familiar smile with the austere regard of control. It made him happy for the moment, and satisfied with you, while it interfered not in the remotest degree with your own self-respect. Indurate yourself against repulse, which is the natural shield of human selfishness. Walk boldly, yet modestly, on through life, clad in the mail of an inviolate self-respect. Act nothing which caused the blush when first you conceived the thought, and none will blush for you. If friends fall off from you, which they will do the more if you are successful, regret them in silence, but never let them see or know it. Walk on thus, strong in faith and hope, and follow perseverance, as your shadow follows yourself. These, with the gift of a quarter of a century of life, and you will make an impression on your fellow-men."

passion, of Eleanor is vanity; but it is a species of amiable vanity, rather grafted on, than rooted in her. It may be called the vital principle of most authors—the serpent of Aaron which swallows the lesser fry.

“My sister lives in its atmosphere; she could not exist without it. Every dinner party she makes, and each *soirée* she attends, is done in the hope of making some little display of her talents. If a unit be added to the sum of her admirers, she is happy. No miser more carefully treasures their weight and value. Yet, she is really a most amiable and an unselfish character, although a professed authoress. She simply displays her banner in the field of literature, but with no boastful mottoes attached to it. She writes down herself in her book, and leaves the world to make its comments.”

“Surely,” observed Constance, with inte-

rest, "you are describing an interesting and an original character?"

"I am. Eleanor is original in everything she does and says; you read it on her entrance into the room."

"I am surprised that with her name and pretensions, she is not more widely known than those of lighter reputation."

"It is because in striving to be original she becomes obscure, and no amount of labour improves her. It is the fault of her nature, or rather of her organisation; the strings of the instrument are disordered, not impaired. Such a mind is ever on the verge of forming something great, with the impossibility of achieving it. Her favourite topic is 'high art,' and by the term given to it her failure is understood. If her mental vision be somewhat weakened when turned inwardly, it is clear and defined when dwelling on the

faculties of others. She is always interesting when self-identity is forgotten. But hush—here she comes ! ”

“ My dear brother,” said Lady Eleanor, lightly tripping into the room, while affectionately saluting him, “ am I not delighted? And for you,” she added, embracing Constance—“ most welcome, in truth, are you ! Reginald has, of course, said all for me ; but what he has *not* said is—that you look the very heroine I am in want of at this particular moment. A something of nature, yet of high art, floating between Miranda and Rebecca—those heroines of all time. And won’t I create a third ? ” she exclaimed triumphantly.

Lady Eleanor was one by herself in appearance ; either that self, or nature stepping in first, had decreed it to be so. Her slight figure appeared more attenuated in an elegant

dressing-gown, conveying the impression that she might be blown away from the carpet by any strong gust of wind. The lines of proportion were finely traced in her figure, but there was something of stiffness and starchiness in her carriage that imparted to it a rigidity.

Slight as was her form, it was laced, braced, and kirtled, until it looked like the very embodiment of a Scotch ballad, stark and stiff, escaped from its sheet, and taking a morning constitutional on the Grampians. Some one had told her, or her love of looking original had conceived it, that a full curled head, and brow surmounted by ringlets, such as we see in Lely's portraits, was becoming to her. Her well-formed head, therefore, presented an affluence of curls, tangled like vine leaves, not ungracefully, above her forehead; they also shadowed and gave relief to features of no pronounced character. As is

often the case, the face and the writer were in full harmony. The character of her face was in her writings, and her writing was stereotyped in her face.

Nature, ever the same in her work, and filled with one idea, had subdued or neutralised one faculty by balancing the stronger one against the weaker. Thus, in Lady Eleanor, the head was finished off with a fineness that promised something great; the same hand held on its way to the full-orbed eyes and the ample forehead, and then, as if the thought had occurred that too much was being given, and to a woman, compensation was made by closely serrated lips, thin and of no purpose, depressed also on either side by vacillation and self-distrust.

And such was the resort of the authoress on the completion of her abortive attempts. The energy and perseverance required to

plunge again into the mental web she had woven, to readjust the threads enfiling and confusing her labours, was wanting in her. Two handmaids were ever stationed by her shoulder, and were called in by herself, to approve what she had done. Prompted by her, they maintained that all was excellent, while she, in her delight, forgot that their names were Vanity and Self-love. Consequently, the golden key that opened her heart was praise. To be continually confirmed in her faith that she was the poetess of her age was to make her thoroughly happy. A glance at the face of Lady Eleanor showed also that she was one of those to whom would be confided no disclosures of joy or sorrow. A want of sympathy and an absence of feeling were traceable in every line of her features, where all was dry, cold, and impassive.

"I am sure," rejoined Constance, replying to the compliment, "that you will find me a willing, but a most unworthy sitter."

"I imagine all women perfect, if they are not. I preach up the dignity of human nature, and the moral wonderment of man, et cætera, as a matter of course; but I do not believe in one syllable of it. I believe man to be exactly what I have observed of him through life, a vain and iron-hearted being, super-humanly brutal with occasion, and always intensely selfish in his dealings towards woman."

Therefore had her brother never confessed to her his inmost thought, and still less of his life was known to her. They were strangers in all save their relationship.

"I am," she would say to him, "that which you ought to have been—a great imaginative writer."

"So let it be," he replied, "but you are

without one particle of that great experience that forms and builds up the poet's soul, and without which he remains a writer of verses."

"I carry that practical part within myself; and if ever I should unfold the leaves of the heart, I resolve you into nothing."

"I hope you have looked at the pictures hung round my cabinet, Constance, for so I feel that I may call you; they are few, but of value. There is the genuine Raffaele which was given to me by dear Mr. Finnikin, who, you know, extols me to the skies as the sole expounder of 'high art;' and then, look at that masterpiece of Claude; I brought it myself from the Corsini palace. There is the famous Grecian landscape, clearness pervading the whole composition of the wooded foreground. The setting sun is mellowing over a distant river; its silver light is discerned between the arches of the bridge which, airily spanning

it, rises in the front. Figures are passing thereon, thrown out in relief against the twilight. The river, unseen, is supposed beneath; but, to mark its site, this great master has represented a mist rising between, yet scarcely veiling, the wooded depths on either side. A Pantheon-shaped temple of Apollo is on the right hand of the picture, raised on a slight elevation. Nothing can be more holy, if the term might be used, than the chastity of that introduction; it looks like the Temple of Evening, the presiding genius of the scene.

“On the left side of the picture, a group of Delphic priestesses are reclining. Cattle are browsing on the brown heath near them, all more or less touched by the fading light. Yet, as in nature, so in that marvellous picture, every object is distinctly seen. There is no confusion of light and shade, no indistinct ideas. Each of the figures is finished with

exquisite care ; while the autumnal heath, near them, is mellowed to a richer tint, soberly toned, and in repose and keeping with the whole : we feel better and quieter while looking on it."

the lines are, as it were, splitten asunder to wreak on them his multitudinous and infinite thoughts—were noted down as gravely as were the profundities of Hamlet, as were the fiery convulsions of Othello, as were the remorseful gnawings of Macbeth, the regrets of Slender, or the fading reminiscences of Shallow !”

“ And I discern the same mental harmony in the face of Milton, but the universality is wanting. An absorption of religious veneration fills and inspires his face — a one impression and expression of veneration and devotional reverence is stamped thereon as the one idea of his being.

“ The face of Milton is not the face of one conversant with his fellow-man, or of one who mingled among the common roll. Reverie and abstraction are seated on his high, calm forehead until you think you hear him saying—

"But first and chiefest with thee bring

"Him that soars on golden wing,—

"The cherub Contemplation."*

"You discern the man who could have lived a hermit amidst the wilds of Vallombrosa, even as he existed in comparative solitude within the stony wilderness of London.

"In the austere and severe face of Dante, you read the profoundly-traced lines of a malignant feeling on which his spirit fed until the habit of indulgence stereotyped it on his features. The humanizing lines of sympathy are there buried, as if they had never been, in the deep indentures of disappointment that are delved on his forehead, where the anatomy of the deeper passions is cicatrized."

"Pray let me interrupt you, but for moments only, on Dante. Let us have something pre-

* Il Penseroso.

variety, never found its way to the heart. Personalities of the day interested the age and formed the soul of the poem. It was a satirical, or eulogistic history of the time.

“Looking at Dante as the man, his work is better understood. He manifests more than the usual inconsistencies of human character. He admired other Beatrices, and he confesses it in his verses. To his wife, Gemima Donati, he makes no allusion. After she had borne him seven children, he separated himself and never saw her again. In the meanwhile, his sons died of the plague, and she soon followed them. ‘But these things,’ observes his last biographer, ‘fell in with his wishes; his religious silence on them all arose from a dignified reserve.’

“Considered as the patriot, his letter to Henry VII., inviting him to attack Florence,

remains an indelible blot on his memory, showing his real feeling for that country which he affected to lament.

“His appeal to the knife against those who differed from him in his estimation of the aristocracy was unworthy of the sage or the man, revealing irascibility that verged on insanity, an irascibility continually betrayed in his writings.

“Boccaccio, his profoundest admirer, asserts that he could descend to casting stones from the street against the boys whom he might hear disparaging the Ghibelline faction.

“Touching the self-love of Dante, he spoke of the ‘Commedia’ as a work to which heaven and earth had lent a hand. He was, like Goethe, ever anxious and preoccupied on the subject of his fame as a philosopher and a poet.

“As the social man, he had intimate connection with public singers, and he sang well

himself. In a word, he lived the triple life of all men of any mark ; his first stage was that of hope, love, and faith ; then followed the sway and convulsions of the passions ; then the rule of science, of self-command, and of poetry.

“The incongruity of introducing Virgil, when any saint in the calendar had been more in keeping, has found, of course, its defenders.

“The heathen poet, however, pledges himself that three blessed women shall protect in heaven ‘the poor wandering poet,’ namely, Beatrice, his ladye love ; Mary, queen of angels ; and Lucia, or the light, his especial patroness. In addition to these, Virgil also kindly promises him a saviour and a symbolic hound.

“ Among a few units from sumless grotesqueries, one might instance that Virgil saves his friend from the forked tail of Geryon,

by placing himself between him and it, until they arrive at Malebolge.

“Among a pantomime of horrors, amusing because grotesque, Dante suddenly challenges Lucan and Ovid to record similar scenes, and begs the attention of the latter to a metamorphosis of his own; even that of Bosio, who, transformed to a snake, flies away hissing.

“In the Ninth Circle, we get sight of Satan with his three faces. The devils of Dante are creations drawn from the mediæval legends, made up of horns, claws, hooks, and whips, black, scorched, indecent, and angulous; ‘but,’ says an ingenious critic, ‘they have a peculiar grandeur.’

“Satan is invested with six flabby sails for wings, himself being, in form and colour, a gigantic bat. Milton has taken the idea, turning it to his own majestic usage,—

‘ Six wings he wore,
To shade his lineaments divine!

was the recipient and digester of art and science—a many-sided man (using the German furniture phrase), polishing each in turn, and succeeding in all accordingly. The student and the compounder are traced in each line of his countenance; it is the aspect of a man intent over a chess-board, more absorbed in the movements of another than of his own.

“His poetry was mosaic work, pieces put together in harmony of tone, hue, and fitting, until the finished piece became as polished as marble, as finely cut, and as cold. The absence of all human compassion is marked in a countenance which is the genuine index to the character of his poetry. His life, both in his youth and age, was one outrage against Nature; and she amply avenged herself in depriving him of those human sympathies without which the poet is—*vox, et præterea nihil*.”

“And there,” said Lady Eleanor, pointing

to a finely-finished bust of Lord Byron, "is that ardent and commanding head, which I never regard without a feeling of admiration and of regret. A regret for no failure—he could fail in nothing—but that he should have been cut off when his powers were expanding into their grandest development as attested in 'Cain' and the 'Prophecy of Dante.' Take three lines from it, conveying an image which I value more than a series of 'Commedias.' Speaking of prostrate Italy, he says :—

Like to a harp string stricken by the wind,
The sound of thy lament shall, rising o'er
The seraph voices, touch the Almighty mind !

"He was not destined for age, he could not have arrived to it. He was a precocity of the Titan brood, doomed to die young ; you read it in his countenance. He could not have declined into senility, still 'taking care

of his fame.' As Sir Walter Scott finely and chivalrously said of him, 'He let his fame take care of itself. His foot was always in the arena, his shield hung always in the lists; and, although his own gigantic renown increased the difficulty of the contest, he came off always with honour, almost always with complete triumph.'

"He breasted the mountain heights in the full vigour of his truth and strength; he won their summits, and the inspirations of poetry came from him that can die only with the language.

"He was as Mercutio in the hands of Shakespeare; the master despatched him in the third act, else had he been overcome by his creation; even he could not have carried on that elastic and rebounding spirit.

"Nature, at the outset, had given to Lord Byron all; and she recalled him to herself when she could add no more."

CHAPTER VII.

Hang there like fruit, my soul,
Till the tree die!

SHAKESPEARE.

WHILE yet the Lady Eleanor was uttering the last words, the doors of the saloon were opened, and a servant entered, presenting a letter to Sir Reginald Mortimer.

He received it with an air of indifference, perceiving it was written in a hand unknown to him. On perusing the commencing lines, he hastily rose from his seat. His whole

visage was suddenly changed by the greatness of his emotion.

“Gracious heaven!” he exclaimed, addressing himself rather to Constance than to the Lady Eleanor, my daughter is at last found! Even now she will be here—she is even now on her way to our doors!”

He had scarcely given utterance to the expression, when the door abruptly opened, and the Dame Gilmour entered, looking as calm and as self-possessed as when last they met. She led in, or rather drew after her, Pearl, looking pale and agitated. Lionel Mortimer followed them.

“Behold!” exclaimed the dame, in a firm and decisive voice, “my pledge is fulfilled,—the daughter is restored to her father!”

At a single glance, a recognition of one feeling, one passion, and one absorption was acknowledged on either side. The father held

forth his arms, the daughter was folded within them.

Such holy meetings are not for description ; or, rather, no attempt should be made to describe the indescribable. They who in life have known and remember similar meetings, when hearts that long have repressed their emotions are at length poured forth, will know also the impossibility of their expression, the mutual endearments, the hasty exclamations again and again repeated; for joy, like grief, rings no changes in its wild monotonies—a passion that loves to dwell on its intensity of delight.

Long these effusions of happiness endured uninterrupted and unbroken, until they exhausted themselves in sighs and tears. Grief and joy have one expression ; the extremes of either meet, and are the same.

Pearl turned towards Constance.

"And shall *we* not, also," she said, "become as one in heart?—we who were first brought together on that shore where I was born! Shall we not again return there and live once more in the past?"

"Assuredly we will," said the father, calming down his agitation, while again drawing Pearl towards him, "and the Gilmours shall again hold their position, and learn to bless the day when they restored my child. Sister Eleanor," turning to her and taking her hand, "we have too long overlooked you, you are witness to a new life, born as it were before our eyes. What other, save ourselves, could experience or guess at our feelings?"

But her brother, for the first and only time of his life, did injustice to that sister.

She had stood by and watched that scene of passionate excitement, a silent but a heedful observer. She saw enacted before

her a scene of real passion of which her colder imagination could have formed no idea.

She felt that the realities of life melted away the rising mists of fancy into nothingness. She marked before her two living females, each of whom excelled and dwarfed the shadows of her creations. Each of them possessed beauty and expression of her own which would tax to the utmost any descriptive power she could embody. She felt that obscure words created but obscurer shadows, that the reality must be before her to make the copy reflective.

The suddenly-revealed position of Pearl, their relationship, and her remarkable appearance, for awhile filled her mind and interdicted her words. But when she saw those who were nearest and dearest to her overflowing with the noblest effusions of our

nature, the right chords of her heart were sounded, proving that, when roused from her reveries, she was the woman still.

"You do me wrong here, Reginald," she replied to him, "but it is for the first time in your life. I would desire to be one of these I see; one of these whom I so admire. You," she said, affectionately embracing Pearl, "are now become my niece, and you," turning to Constance, "are an intimate, who will look upon my home as yours."

"But where are they gone who gave? Where is the restorer, and where the dame who entered?" exclaimed the father, glancing round the apartment. "Where is the discoverer and the deliverer of all I hold dearest on earth? Where is my nephew? Is he still the evader and disclaimer in great events as in lesser? From what motive has he disappeared? —he whose days have hitherto been

spent in watchfulness till your abode was found."

In the absorption of the moment, the abrupt departure of the matron was unregarded, as that of Lionel.

The colour slightly tinged the cheeks of Pearl, which hitherto had remained pale with conflicting emotions.

"You must not do him wrong," she said, while leaning on her father's arm. "Recollect that in other days we have seen more of him than yourself. It is a generous and noble nature, the master's—so I still call him—how could I say less of him? It was he who protected us, when he had all to lose and nothing to gain. On more than one occasion he ventured his life in our cause, and always his position. And, lastly," she added, with a deeper emotion, while slightly colouring, "he it was who found me alone and unpro-

tected, on a night when I thought myself forsaken by all but Heaven."

"It is even as you have said," replied her father, fondly regarding her, "and perhaps from a motive of deeper feeling, he has left us for this hour alone, drawing the matron after him. You have but shown us what we owe to him; yet you seem to have a reserve—something of hesitation is in your words, as if you withheld the key that might unlock something of these mysteries—"

"Indeed, I know nothing more," said Pearl, hurriedly; "yet much that I imagine to be the truth—"

"And would you conceal from us—"

"Nothing—I think that the character of the master remains unchanged—the same restlessness, the same impulsiveness that filled up and made his life on that shore, he has carried with him into the heart of this great

city. I fear that the same pursuits absorb him, but on a different stage."

"You mean, it may be," said Sir Reginald, "that he now finds the excitement he loves in the attractions of the gaming-table?"

"I fear it," replied Pearl, "from the expression that fell from him, as it seemed unconsciously, while guiding me homeward on the eventful night we met. He seemed absorbed, as by some impending calamity. When he spoke of himself, it was with incoherency."

"You picture the appearance of the gamester after some unfortunate hazard;—over such heads the blade hangs suspended by a thread."

"But how shall we hope to find this water-drop in the ocean of life around us? To whom can we turn for assistance? What clue to him are we likely to find?"

"Perhaps," said Constance, thoughtfully,

after a pause, "from myself. I have just received a note from a worthy and excellent friend of mine, Mr. Ralph. Now, of all men, from his thorough knowledge of London life, and from his love to trace out mysteries of any kind (for in such occupation consists his happiness), he is the most sure of discovering the retreat of the master ; besides, he has seen the Gilmour family, which, of itself, might lead to the clue."

"This is valuable news," exclaimed Sir Reginald. "Let me entreat of you to visit him ; allow no time to be lost. Let each devote the hours to exertion. I will visit the Dame Gilmour, but not alone : they shall have cause to remember my visit, and know me as I am. Pearl shall remain at home," he added, "as the companion of her aunt, while you are gathering and giving intelligence to that excellent man, whose name and character I have not forgotten."

CHAPTER VIII.

Nor moving less,
 They of the imaginative race unknown ;
 They of the flushed cheek and the withered heart,
 Who felt the laurel-crown a wreath of fire :
 They who but lived to catch the breath of fame ;
 Who wasted passionate life before one shrine
 And self-made idol :—they who shrank to tell
 Privations magnified by nerves diseased,
 By the fine sense and apprehensive eye.

Revelations of Life.

MEANWHILE, after the interview with his friend, Julian Aubrey gradually discovered the disastrous effects of his exposure during

that eventful evening. He was now confined to his attic, a prey to slow fever. His books were scattered round him ; papers overspread his little table. He took them up with listless hands, and he gazed on them with confused perceptions, for the once clear intellect had become as a blank sheet—a dull, heavy void. He felt that, for awhile, his understanding had departed, and he replaced them on the table. The heaviest stroke that can fall on the invalid had fallen on him—he had no acquaintance ; none to come in and while away the heavy hours with cheering talk, animate the pulse, and leave the sufferer better.

Mr. Ralph, unanticipating his serious illness, had promised to come “in a day or two”—that prodigal promise on so exacting a creditor as Time, the phrase which, in the mouth of an occupied man, really meant immediately.

But, alas! in this hurrying and devouring life of ours, in our selfish forgetfulness of minor events, while feverishly pursuing a fancied good, how much of evil and of misery, how much of irreparable suffering may ensue, closed in death and the grave within the compass of—"a day or two!"

Julian Aubrey lived in isolation from his kind; none came near him, save the hasty attendant of the lodging-house. None knew of his rapidly increasing indisposition. Although in the close vicinity of the Gilmour's, he especially forbade any report to be made to them of his illness, from a feeling which he did not pause to define. A low, slow fever was gradually undermining the little stamina that was within him. It was the almost certain effect that must have followed the inflammatory cold taken on the night when he stood forward as the un-

recognised champion of Pearl, and when he found one in his friend Ralph Maliphant.

Yet Julian, isolated as he was in obscurity, could not be said to be without friends in the world. He was one of those few men who make friends, or at least well-wishers, by personal appearance alone. There was a confiding expression in his open physiognomy which invited spontaneity from others. Men felt, while regarding him, that he was genuine, that nothing untrue existed in his nature. But he was also one of those whose fine organisation and sense of self-respect were misfortunes to him, or, rather, veritable and inevitable injuries.

He shrank from placing himself under obligations which he felt he might not be enabled to return; the root of which feeling is a finely-disguised and calculating selfishness.

We are placed in the world to assist each

other : we are born and formed for it, and not to stand idly on the bank when the good and the brave are sinking in the stream. To refuse or shrink from such assistance is to take refuge in an independence whose origin is not in human feeling. Such a mind is bounded to weigh all kindly acts and impulses by the cold measure of give and take. A slow and sordid account of debtor and creditor is kept up within, watched carefully by a calculating and easily offended spirit. But now the hour had arrived to Julian when the composure and clearness of mind necessary to thoughtful effort had ceased to exist. It might have been manifest, also, to any eyes keener than those of a hired nurse, that something was weighing on his mind, as yet unconfessed.

“Nurse,” said he, breaking at length a long silence, while restlessly turning on his

bed, "tell me again, my good woman, are you sure—that is, are you *quite* sure—that you gave my letter to the office, addressed to Mr. Ralph Maliphant?"

"I am quite certain, sir. I put it into the box with these blessed hands."

"Strange!" muttered the invalid to himself. "He might have been here full four hours since. Has he, too, forgotten me, like all the rest?—and after all his protestations?—never!—that misfortune, I thank God, cannot befall me. If ever faith and sincerity sat on the face of man, it is on that of my only friend."

He had scarcely given vent to the words, when a broad and determined step was heard stumping up the stairs, with a stout resolve that marked alike strength of joint and energy of purpose.

Something of human character may be

traced even in the ascent of a staircase. Everyone has a peculiar mode of doing it. The step of nonchalance is at once recognisable: the careless, the slovenly, and the timid announce themselves and their characters in their modes of ascent, while that of the dun is unmistakable. The lighter step of woman thereon is feline and serpentine, marking the sinuous paths by which she silently attacks the heart, or any other human point which she chooses to attain.

The bluff, abrupt climb of Mr. Ralph was like that of a soldier mounting the scaling-ladder to the assault. It sounded along the staircase, telling the tale that such a man would take no refusal, that no "not at homes" would satisfy him. The thing amounted to a certainty, that he would make an entrance exactly through whatever door he pleased.

Had not Julian known, and brightened up at the well-remembered sound, the salute given on the panel of the door would have aroused a man of less excited nerves—it might have awakened the dead.

Ralph Maliphant entered the room, but, lawyer and man of the world as he was, he could not conceal his first impression as his keen grey eyes riveted themselves in alarm on the altered visage of the poet.

“My dear boy, my good lad!” said he, with the suddenly subdued voice of the most careful nurse, yet cheerily and affectionately, while taking both his hands—“but eh? How is this? What—feverish? But why in the name of heaven did you not send peremptorily for your friend? I should have come instantly. Your note to me hinted nothing of this—had you forgotten or mistrusted me?”

“Never, sir, never!” exclaimed Julian, fer-

vently. "How could I possibly forget? I have still lain here, expecting, hoping, and praying to be better, and thus—"

"And thus," interrupted his friend, "rendering amendment impossible, by dwelling and feeding on this useless fever-fuel which I see lies under your hand. Confound for ever all poetry, I say—God forgive me for swearing!—away with it all!" he reiterated to the nurse, "and then do you for awhile get out of the room."

Ralph drew his chair closer to the bedside.

"Why, my dear boy, with your pulse, high and feverish as it is, how could you think of straining your excited mind? Why, the framework is all tension as it is—all sleeplessness—all restlessness—and you have been pouring out oil on this self-consuming flame! Certainly, from the beginning of things, God deprived poets of the gift of common sense,

conceiving, I suppose, that they could get on very well without it; but they never do. If it be possible to stick in the mud, let a poet alone for effecting it.

"'Tis well, indeed, I am come. I only received your note twenty minutes since. I threw all my papers aside; therefore I had less scruple in serving yours the same turn.

"Now," said he, getting up, unlocking the door, and gently pushing out the nurse, "let us talk the case over. You took your fever on that sad night when we met, which, since, you have diligently fed by many an incentive. And I suspect," he added, but in a lower tone of voice, while regarding the sunken but flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes of Julian, "that the mental physician must be told all ere he can venture to prescribe for the spiritual, which, I see, still rules the body.

"Hear first *my* confession respecting your-

self, which I have hitherto held in reserve ; you will then feel more bound to follow my example.

“ Most men who had met you on the bridge would have considered you as a traveller, or a wayfarer, foredone with fatigue. Such was my first impression, but it was immediately corrected. I saw in your face then, and your disjointed words confirmed my impression, that the mind was more irritated and fatigued than the body. I felt, on the conclusion of that happy evening passed in this room, that you had revealed to me much—much of deepest interest—yet not the whole tale.

“ The wants of the body, while you are in this wretched hole of a dwelling—forgive me for so calling it, for I have finished a better one for you—I will take care are hourly supplied ; but those of the mind you must tell me yourself. In a word, then, is it in the

immediate pressure of poverty, my dear boy ? or, is it anything nearer and dearer ? ”

“ Not immediate, on my honour,” said Julian, earnestly, evading the latter part of the question. “ I can, indeed, as yet, pay my way, however narrowly.”

“ Then,” said the lawyer, while pursuing his impression, “ I place my finger at once on the truth, when I say—you love.”

Julian Aubrey averted his face from his friend ; he felt his cheeks suffused :—

“ I do, my friend,” he exclaimed, while grasping his hand in the greatest agitation, “ I love—hopelessly as madly ! ”

“ Hopelessly, indeed,” mentally thought the old gentleman, while regarding his wasted form and features, adding aloud, “ But, my dear Julian, for so I call you, reflect on what you say ; but, alas ! when ever did the passion reflect and conquer with hope and

faith by its side? —least of all, when met by shaken nerves and an organization overthrown. I beseech you to tell me all—let not a thread of the net be hidden; yet, say nothing of that which you would desire to hide.”

“God forbid!” said Julian, fervidly, “that I should have the shadow of reserve from you. I cannot overcome my nature. What efforts have I not made? Hear the tale, and then judge, and condemn me—if you can.”

And with that faith, which circles, as with an aureole of glory, the brow of uncontaminated youth, and with that open and noble confidence which returns ten-fold that which is given to it, Julian Aubrey told the whole of the story, from the hour when he met Pearl on the stairs, when ascending to their new abode, to the last, when, after many an unnoticed guardianship, he openly presented himself on Waterloo Bridge.

"But, my dear child," exclaimed the old gentleman,—“for men, as poets, are children in such matters, what earthly hope can you have in view? You describe a being, or rather a family, more reduced in the scale of privation than yourself; nay, in a state of absolute want—which, by the way, must be thought of. You know nothing of her beyond her oriental appearance, as you call it. Where is she to be seen? Where do they live? Where can one get at her?” exclaimed he, raising his voice.

“Hush!” said Julian. “Even close to us, in the vicinity of that door, at the end of the passage.”

“Excellent!” exclaimed his friend, abruptly rising. “I will go to them instantly. I will fumigate and—”

Julian rose on his pillow in real alarm:—

“Not for the whole world would I have you

do such a thing, or hint at one syllable of what I have said."

"My dear boy! my sole impulse and movement was to see her myself, and judge of this marvellous beauty, for the lover's imagination, you know—"

Julian faintly smiled:—

"But what is her name?" inquired his friend. "Names, you know, are often indicative of those who bear them?"

"Her name," said Julian, recomposed, "could not easily be forgotten, for it is a name peculiar; nay, she looks it—Pearl Gilmour."

If a shot had been fired close to the old gentleman's ear, he could not have been more suddenly awakened; but the mark of recognition was suppressed.

"What is the matter?" said Julian, regarding him. "I appear to have surprised

you by her name. Have you ever seen her?"

"Never in my life! how on earth should I?" he added hastily; "and if you felt the current of air from that door, you would not wonder that it caused me a momentary shiver. But I see you have more to say. My dear boy, speak on; can I be of the slightest use to you in this matter?—for all tends on that."

"Well, then, I dare to confess," said Julian hesitatingly and agitatedly, while averting his head, "that I have a slight request to make—a request which only you could fulfil. It is, indeed, a vital request, the first and last I may ask you."

"Ay," rejoined the old gentleman, "we can talk about the *last*, when you have had added some score of units to the sum, doubling as you advance. My dear boy, your request, as you call it, is done already, whatever it be,

even to the better half, or the whole, of all I have in the world."

"It is," said Julian, with averted eyes, "that you would kindly cause this note to be placed in her own hands."

"My dear boy," said the old gentleman affectionately, "I would set out to the North Pole to-morrow to do it. I only wish to God (may He forgive me for the oath), but I *do* wish that I looked rather more like a Gany-mede. When shall I set out on my mission?"

"Even now, I would entreat of you," said Julian hurriedly, while inwardly muttering to himself, "for it may be, I have but little time to lose."

"And you are sure the lady lives—"

"Close beside us. I heard her mother's voice, not an hour since."

"And supposing it possible that the young lady should not be there—I mean in the event

of her being absent from home?"—inquired the lawyer reflectively, "what am I to do?"

"Return the letter to me, I beg of you; perhaps you could come again on this evening at eight; she is then at home."

"Hark, my dear young Julian," said his friend, as one who had suddenly made up his mind, "I know she is there now, because, when mounting the stairs, I just caught glimpse of a youthful figure entering the door which you have named; she was closely veiled."

"It is she," sighed Julian; "then you will return and tell me of your reception?"

"No," said the old gentleman, decisively, regarding his excited manner and aspect, "I shall not do so. I must not forget my position," he added in a graver tone, "which is that of your mental physician. I deliver this note in that character, because I see that it will

tranquilize your mind, and act on your spirit as a mental anodyne. Repose is absolutely wanted by you, that repose of sleep which alone recruits the vital function.

“And,” glancing at the table, “I see other necessaries are wanting round you, which shall be supplied ere I am an hour older. One night of good rest, my boy, and, by the morn, your wishes shall be to the letter fulfilled.

“One only return make me,” he said, raising his warning finger :—“no answer, I beseech you ; keep yourself quiet and composed. If you must think, transpose the very word and thing into hope, while picturing her like an angel enrobed with sunshine. Thus soothe the nerves, without exciting them. Hark ! I hear the returning steps of the nurse ; I shall instruct her how to act for a few hours. May God bless you, my dear boy ; be patient, and all shall yet be well.

“And remember,” he added cheerily, “you have a thousand inducements to get well. I shall not hear of your remaining ill, and continuing to make us all uncomfortable, and hurrying about in the most comfortless manner. Why, do you know I have made you my sole heir, that everything I have in funded, landed, and all kind of properties will be yours?”

And with that cheeriness in his eye and face, from which the invalid gains life and strength while looking on, he left the chamber, the eyes of Julian following him to the door.

“God bless my soul!” exclaimed the old gentleman, when safe on the other side of it, and precipitating himself down the stairs, while carefully enclosing the note in a huge old-fashioned pocket-book. “Gracious goodness! who ever can tell, in this life, what the next leaf shall turn up in the chapter of accidents?”

CHAPTER IX.

I never more shall look on thee! Thou art
 A memory loved that must with me depart;
 A holiest relic buried in this heart.

I pass from thee as I had never been,
 A wind that sighed itself o'er thee unseen,
 A human thing that could not from thee wean.

Affections human which thou gav'st: that told
 To thee its grief and joy, that dared unfold
 Passion it could not from thy breast withhold.

Lines upon Douling Sheep Slate.

THE scene of our record returns to the chamber of Julian Aubrey. The curtains of the window, partially unfolded, subdued the light. The physician of the district had made his re-

port of the morning, and all excitement of the slightest nature was strictly forbidden.

“Believe me,” he said, while taking the hand of Mr. Ralph Mailphant, and leading him aside, “I feel an interest in this young patient nearly equal to your own. I therefore dwell the more on the absence of all positive excitement, for I consider the nervous system, from whatever cause, to be fearfully shaken ; and this fact alone renders every precaution necessary. If I can bring down the low fever that is in him, and I am not without hopes, my chiefest work is done. I will renew my visit, at this hour, to-morrow. Meanwhile, farewell !”

After his departure, and while yet his footsteps were heard on the staircase, an unbroken silence reigned within the sick chamber. Each, for awhile, remained absorbed in his thoughts—but the old gentleman first began :

“ You see, my dear Julian, the doctor gives us full hopes. The diseased nerves and the more diseased mental vision of the patient—morally and physically the same—rarely see the truth of themselves; and I have often thought this is why so many die by an unconscious species of self-suicide. I mean by surrendering the hope of convalescence. In the last contest between life and death, the strong desire to live will frequently turn the scale. Be not, therefore, swayed by impulses and feelings that, flattering or depressing, are morbid alike. And, if I warn you,” he added, affectionately, “ it is because, although I know your mind is in a sane state, it is *not* sane when under the influence of fever. It requires, for awhile, a gentle moderator, and another pilot to superintend the helm. Install me, then, as the regent of the hour; I promise abdication on your first healthful summons.”

“Believe me,” said Julian, pressing his hand,
“I am entirely under your control, but—”

“But me no buts, my dear boy! Your case admits of none. An ‘if’ and a ‘but’ are the two eternal stumbling-blocks in our paths to human happiness. Remember poor Dido—‘felix, heu nimium felix!—si.’ She ended with a ‘but,’ of course, for whenever was there not some but laid as a stumbling-block in the path of woman, that either she fell over herself, or made her lover fall? Thank Heaven, I know nothing about their dawdling sex. All I do know is that they have made men pretty much the same fools from the earliest time. There was Helen, you know, and Dido, as I have said, and Cleopatra, and a full score more of them, and they all lived and died in the most uncomfortable manner possible, and the men who loved them still more so!”

Julian faintly smiled.

But Ralph Maliphant demanded impossibilities ; he demanded them in his utter ignorance of the finer movements that set in action the vital springs of our being ; passions uncontrolled and uncontrollable by the sane and strong, and never mastered by the weak.

“ I bring forward woman,” he added, “ because I know well that, ill as you are, that precious piece of goods is first and foremost in your thoughts.”

“ You have heard my story,” said Julian, hesitatingly. “ I have confessed to you everything—how could I do less—and,” he added, with more hesitation, “ perhaps you caused the letter to be placed in her hands ? ”

“ I did so, my dear Julian—indeed I did—but that was an act of yesterday ; and, to tell you the truth, when you first informed me of her name, I knew to whom you alluded.

It was a secret which had arrived to myself, and now not worth the repetition. The hours of sleep which you had last night, and the kindly hints of the physician, have given a new aspect to the face of things," he added, while glancing sidelong and cautiously at the countenance of the invalid.

It was indeed much changed, and with that rapid progression which sometimes marks decline, when the meeting symptoms gather and concentrate themselves, and gradually and almost imperceptibly, like the rising waters of a tideless sea, cover the slowly receding sands.

"Believe me," said Julian, "you magnify my real state, and you darken it by your fears. That I am ill and feverish, I know well; but I feel a substantial strength within me which is self supporting. I feel, for instance," he added, after a pause, approaching at once the

mark toward which his mind had been tending from the moment the doctor left the room, "I feel as if the very appearance of Miss Gilmour, even at the doorway of the room—for I would not have her pressed to enter—would compose me, inasmuch as the thoughts that are busy within me would then be at rest."

Whilst he thus spake, and somewhat more hurriedly than heretofore, the purple tint gradually deepened in the centre of his cheek. Ralph Maliphant regarded him with a sidelong look ; but with an expression of the profoundest sorrow. He saw the whole truth in its extent, yet he answered cheerily:—

"So be it, Julian—even so be it. God forbid that I should contend the point with you in anything—now, too, when I know that the very rufflement of opposition would do

you an infinitely greater injury. Let, then, the young lady enter whenever she shall present herself, and may she prove to you a tutelary spirit ! ”

Julian hastily turned toward his pillow for a small silver watch, which he drew from under it.

“ Yes,” he sighed, turning deadly pale, “ I felt it would be so. The time I named to her in my note is passed ; she will not come, for she is not here ! ”

“ No, but she is coming,” replied the old gentleman, as if he were speaking of any ordinary arrival. “ Even now I hear her talking to some one on the stairs. And now, my dear boy,” he continued, taking his hand sadly, “ I will leave you for awhile ; only I entreat of you, hear the one last warning word of your best, your only friend. Now that she is here, and now that you will see her, be calm, be quiet.”

Julian returned the pressure of his hands, while he scarcely heard his utterance. The words reached his ears but as sounds—the step of Pearl caught his ear—the murmur of her deep, thrilling voice absorbed his entire being.

“She is there,” he mentally said, as he listened! “I thank God that she is come at last.”

It was well for him that, concealed under the deep shadow of the curtains, the flush in his cheek and the sparkle in his eyes were unseen by the Mentor ere he left the chamber. Nor did Julian see the expression in the face of his friend as he rose to open the door for her.

“My dear young lady, if you will so permit an elder, and a friend, to address you, “it is well that you are come, for I verily believe that you will prove the best physician; therefore do I leave the patient in your hands.”

He then added, but in lower tones, "He has heard nothing of the changes which have ensued in your position; let me, then, suggest to you that any surprise, or cause for fresh excitement, could only entail the most serious effects on him."

As the old gentleman left the chamber, he turned at the door to cast a secret glance at Pearl, unheeded—it was one of ardent and deep admiration. He then, for a moment, reverted his eyes to the bed, shook his head, and left the room.

But Pearl had a character and a fashioned will of her own, confirmed and strengthened by recent revelations. She saw the case at a glance; she felt and acted accordingly.

She respected the young man from her heart. In despite of his youth, her sentiment was almost reverential towards him. She remembered that he was the first, and the only

one, who had stood by her in the days of misfortune; that on the night of their entrance into the great city, when, without a friend, he had offered to them his daily bread; that he had shared with them his last mite when he was in a state of evident privation; and, chiefest of all, he had followed her, an unknown guardian, night after night, through the streets of London, to become her immediate defender against wrong and insult.

She had recently heard these things from the dame Gilmour.

The note which he had sent to her was almost a sacred thing, and her immediate recognition of it was an obligation and a relief to her heart.

She returned the pressure of the old gentleman's hand on parting; he felt that he was understood, but she said nothing.

She advanced at once into the room, ac-

accompanied by the dame. The eyes of the invalid Julian glanced hurriedly and agitatedly from herself to the matron. Pearl understood that rapid glance ; but the dame had already retired, having placed a chair beside the pillows of the invalid.

Pearl seated herself beside him.

The moral difference between them, even in his healthiest state of existence, was measureless ; they were like two beings brought together from different spheres.

Pearl had not the fine, yet morbid, organisation to feel or to comprehend the fluctuating changes, or rising or falling, of the nervous temperament of Julian Aubrey.

To use well-known words of a forgotten poet, "the pure and eloquent blood spake in her cheeks." There was no flaw or weakness in her temperament, where all was healthful, and feminine, and firm, and self-possessed.

Such a one, then, could not understand, far less enter into, perhaps, all the phases of a shaken yet ardent temperament ; still less could Pearl comprehend the inmost feelings of a genuine and deeply imaginative poet ; that one of the finest types was before her, each feeling magnified, and each impression made more susceptible, by the greatest of all operatives on the heart of man, when in its strongest and firmest beatings—the presence of a young and beautiful woman.

But that which Pearl *did* fully understand and appreciate, beyond most women, was the pure and uncorrupted nature of the youth, the moral endurance which she knew he had undergone, the courage (a faculty which all women appreciate) which she had seen manifested, and in her cause, and with these his absolute freedom from all selfism, then manifested when he gave the very bread he wanted to strangers.

And all these sentiments were magnified and rendered more intense by the appearance of the invalid. She could not but read, at a single glance of her quick eyes, the attenuated frame, the high pale forehead, with its blue laxed veins, the hollow cheeks, at times as white as ashes, and then fitfully glowing, and revealing the embers of a flame which was silently and secretly consuming him.

Julian Aubrey had raised himself on his pillow, and gazed on the beauty, and the freshness and light, as it were, which she seemed to bring with her into the chamber. He gazed on her with a fervid admiration, or, rather, with a species of idolatry, of which Pearl could not have formed the faintest idea. She saw—for what woman does not see it at a glance?—the admiration she had excited, but there her perception ended. But he said nothing; his silence, so little comprehended

by her, was of itself the most eloquent language.

Women, from an intuition that never fails them, always break such pauses the first ; men—never.

“I am come, indeed,” she began, lowering a voice, each accent of which vibrated through him, while gently placing her hand on his own, “I came on the moment I heard from you, and I do hope now you will let me be your constant nurse, if only to pay you back—if I could do so—something of what we owe you. Nay,” she added, raising her finger, “*I* must talk awhile, and not yourself. Remain only calm and quiet, dwell only on one thought, repose on one faith, the full hope of your recovery, which I and your excellent friend feel and know, and all shall yet be well. But you must believe in me, also, you know,” she added, smiling on him ; “you

must believe in *me*, recollect, even as I have believed in yourself."

It might be said of Julian Aubrey that the only moments of happiness, of uncontrolled, unutterable joy, such as he had never dreamed,—moments, fleeting as they were, rolling on in their course as does all human happiness that endures but for moments—entered into his soul with each utterance of the deep, silvery tones of the vibrating voice of Pearl. He heard, or, rather, he drank in the words themselves, respiring truth, and frankness, and affection, but his eyes were riveted on her lips.

Even while she spoke, the flashing thought came over him, mingled with those exquisite sensations, that now—absolutely now—had arrived the reality and the all he had ever dreamed. He grasped, as it were, the palpable happiness, while yet he felt it was real.

Until then Julian Aubrey had never looked on perfect beauty. He had seen the face and the figure in imagination only ; embodyings of fancy and of shadow, indistinct, and vanishing while made. But now he saw the real and the living form before him ; her hand had been placed on his own ; her voice was still vibrating on his ear ; her face and her eyes lighted up with feeling whose memory could not pass away, were looking on him.

But, in his case, as in all, the law of Nature pursued its course. Happiness never presents herself to man with both her hands full ; to the excess of joy, given with the one, a certain measure of pain or reverse is everlastingly tendered to him with the other : both must be gratefully accepted.

The extraordinary change that appeared now rising on his destiny ; expressions from her lips, such as he could not have anticipated,

each word of which was construed into stepping-stones for the ladder of future success—a bright future opening in prospect—she to be its ruling and presiding star,—all flashed on his mind, and, for awhile, took from him the power of utterance.

And then a sudden faintness came over him, until he scarcely saw her ; and then he ceased to feel her hand, in the sudden coldness of his own. But with a powerful mental effort he rallied from the symptoms.

“ I hear all that you have said,” he began, after a pause. “ Each word of yours is a remembrance for my life ; yet, while I am well enough, I wish to say, before this feeling of faintness returns on me again,” he added, passing his hand over his forehead, “ and I fear it may ; will you,” he said, hastily and agitatedly, “ grant me one request?—I ask you but one.”

"I entreat of you," said Pearl, in her lowest voice, "be calm. Can you doubt me? Is there a human request which you could ask me, that is not already granted? Could you question my truth and confidence, with all my faith in your own?"

"I do not; I thank God! I do not;" exclaimed Julian, fervidly. "I am more calmed, for I look in your face."

While speaking, he hastily withdrew a white napkin which had covered a small vase of alabaster, placed on the table by his bedside. A moss rose, in its fullest beauty, was placed therein.

"I do entreat you, then," raising himself on the pillow, and placing it in her hand, "to keep this flower for my sake, and when its leaves are withered and dead—" he repressed the hysterical passion which had risen in his throat, but the effort was distressing.

"It is but a fragile thing, yet I chose it as my offspring, for in some sort it seems to resemble myself. When it dies, I wish to say when it is quite withered, place its leaves carefully within this locket."

He drew forth a large golden locket from under the pillow, and he pressed it to his lips.

"This is the only relic I have of my dear and honoured mother. Could she watch me now from the heaven which her virtues merited, I feel that she would approve this last act of mine—for I pass her gift into better and purer hands!

"Within this locket," he added, hesitatingly, "I have ventured to place the smallest curl of my hair. If I could think you would always keep it, if I could hope that you would sometimes look on it, and remember me, even to those far distant years when time,

and perhaps sorrow, shall tell even on that lovely face, I should, I think, pass away happy, if pass I must—I entreat of you, then, to swear this to me!”

Such an appeal, without the voice, the action, and the expression of him who poured it forth, whose passionate idolatry towards herself breathed and burned in each accent, made the profoundest impression on the heart of Pearl; she saw the whole truth. Tears, thick and fast, rolled down her cheeks uncontrolled. Hastily she drew the chair nearer his bedside, and placed both her hands within his own.

“I call God to witness!”—she exclaimed agitatedly receiving the locket from him, while looking upwards,—“and, may He hear, also, my prayers for you!—that now—that ever, even to the end of my life, however early or however late be sent my mandate to depart—

that I will wear this remembrance of a dearest and truest friend around my neck. I here put it on before you, Julian Aubrey, and here it shall remain, and when I go, it shall go with me also; and here I record my oath! If I forget it, may He who hears—forget me also!”

Julian heard her to the end: in listening, his eyes were riveted on her eloquent face, as if they grew there; as if his spirit had passed into her own. He heard her sobbing accents—he saw the tears thickly flowing down her cheeks—and he felt they were shed for him.

“I am happy!” he uttered with difficulty, while looking fervently upwards—“I thank God for it—I *am* happy! I almost thought, when you entered the room, that I was dying—the sensation, I feel, again comes over me—but—may every joy be yours!”

Pearl's face was buried in her hands; kneeling now beside the bed, and absorbed in prayer, she did not hear the last words of Julian.

At that moment, the door of the room suddenly opened, and Ralph entered. His first glance at Julian staggered him.

"Gracious Heaven! my dear lady," he exclaimed — "how is this? My poor boy is fast sinking. Julian is dying! You had better leave the chamber."

But Pearl acted up to her own character. She was not one of those frail and timid natures that are terrified by the aspect of death. She had been taught that the perishable framework of the mortal body was as nothing to the living soul! As she knelt, she retained firmly the hands of Julian within her own, and uttered her prayer aloud, while his friend supported the sinking youth on his pillow.

For a moment Julian rallied and faintly smiled on him. His eye was then riveted on Pearl's upraised face, while she prayed. He gently withdrew his hands from her and crossed them over his breast. He then leaned his head for support on the shoulder of his friend—it reposed thereon for a moment—and then fell forward on his breast.

“He is dead!” exclaimed Ralph Maliphant, relinquishing his hold—“he is dead!” he cried aloud—while gazing on Julian in the extremity of his agony—“he is gone!—he is taken from us, and for ever!”

And the old man, throwing himself over the body of Julian, sobbed like the veriest child!

CHAPTER X.

That confiding man became
Changed, as one with heart sedate,
Prescient of a holier state,
Yet he walked with men, the same
In his outward mien.

Our Youth and How it Passed.

THE scene of our history now returns to the office of Mr. Ralph.

Seated before his desk, and absorbed in the perusal of certain papers, which were crowded before him, he pursued, as usual, the noiseless tenor of his course. The same quiet and grave aspect of business was going on around

him. The silent clerks, with their pens, were occupied over their parchments, meshing out the inextricable nettings of the law.

But the appearance of the old gentleman was changed. A certain elasticity of look and movement which, heretofore, marked and characterised him, seemed now either dormant or extinct. The papers before him were referred to with slower hands, and a more sombre appearance was imparted to him, from his suit of deepest mourning.

A single addition had been made to the furniture of his apartment.

In the furthestmost recess, occupied by writers of literature, to which a former allusion has been made, a bust in marble had been raised, with the name on the pedestal of
—JULIAN AUBREY.

For the truth had been, that the old gentleman did not know the reality of his interest,

and his profound attachment to the youth, until he was removed from him for ever.

He had hitherto lived and felt, as he said of himself, as an old bachelor, with nothing to particularly love or hate, with an old duenna of a housekeeper, attached to him by mere habit, on whom he could occasionally vent a peevish word, just because he had no female influence to temper him.

Grown grey in his knowledge of human life, and familiar with the worst parts of it, for men rarely go to lawyers but with angry, selfish, or jaundiced feelings, the appearance of Julian Aubrey formed an era in his life.

He saw at a glance that he had, at last, found out, and by the merest of human chances, a nature unspoiled ; one who was rapidly sinking in his attempts to rise in the world ; one whom the weight of life itself was prostrating.

This was exactly the kind of interest

which Ralph desired to feel. It was something to look after, and fidget himself about ; one to whom he could say what he liked, throwing off the buckram of conventionalism. Above all, Julian was one by whom he could stand as Mentor, to advise and direct ; over whom, also, he could exercise that little kind of influence which is delightful when the object is felt worthy of it. Now Julian Aubrey more than realized all he had dreamed of his *beau ideal* of proselytism ; he met him, and he was happy.

It was nothing against this spell of attraction that he found him attached, or, rather, wrapped up in the being of another. On the contrary, the spell that drew towards him was stronger thereby, the interest was deepened ; advice and sympathy were more required to guide the paths of his youthful Telemachus.

Julian Aubrey had been something to pet, something to make much of; something (for still a refined selfishness shapes and points our noblest aims); something to enlarge by his experience, which would be owned by the mind that was led by it; something to watch over, almost to patronise, yet with threads almost as fine as gossamer, neither felt nor seen, yet instinctively obeyed, guided while enlightened by the larger experience of life from one who had fathomed its depths; one whose tutelary regard should be acknowledged and returned by a like generous confidence.

And all these illusions were at once destroyed by the sudden intervention of that ruling circumstance to which, more or less, we are alike the slaves. His hopes were frustrated, his visions were fled; he turned back again into the unspiritual paths of life. He had watched over his last hours with

a devotional love more talked of than seen. He had followed the youth to his last resting-place. He returned home a wiser, but a sadder man, and he said, "I will open my heart no more. At all events," he muttered to himself, such thoughts occasionally glancing over his mind while occupied on the affairs of another, "gleams of sunshine are always falling somewhere on this clouded world, and they could have lighted on no better brows than those of Miss Constance."

"Who could have thought," he added, turning over a huge codicil before him, "that even the chapter of accidents could have turned up such a trump card?—that an old crab-stick of an uncle, whom, by the way, she had never seen, could have bequeathed to her such a fine property? But, hark! the knocker, I declare; it is she, sure enough, come at last. It does one's heart good to

have something bright to look upon." He looked at his watch. "Ay, just two hours and a-half, as usual, after her appointment! But when ever *did* a woman keep an appointment with a lawyer? Had it been a lover and 'a trysting place,' as the romances call it, catch *her* from being behind her time! Charles," he added, after the escape of this little ebullition of spleen, "are you as deaf as the knocker? Don't you hear it?"

The clerk ran to the door.

"My dear Miss Constance," exclaimed the old gentleman, hastily rising on her appearance, and cordially greeting her, "you have received my second note of the appraisal of fortunate news, no doubt. Not," he added, restraining himself, "that we should rejoice at, or term fortunate, the departure of any human being. God forbid!—poor creatures that we are, who may follow them on their

journey with the next night. No! But when growling old bears, or laughing human hyenas, assuming the bodies and forms of men, do at last, tired of wrangling and making everyone unhappy round them, turn round and go to sleep, leaving to their betters that which they would have taken with them if they could have possibly done so, why then I do think we have a right to feel a decent complacency in the spoil."

"Mr. Maliphan," said Constance, earnestly, and with the expression of unfeigned interest, while regarding his changed appearance, "I, indeed, well know and I appreciate the kindness of your heart; for have I not," she added, "on many occasions proved it? I know that I am talking to a friend—"

"Why, of course, you are; for what else am I good, saving to be of use?—and, in the golden shower that has fallen suddenly on

you, there is sufficient to liquidate your father's deficits fifty times over, leaving you a handsome settlement besides. Yet, in despite of all this, I see, or I fancy I see," he added, more closely regarding her, "a reserve, or, rather, a something of a cloud on your forehead. You appear as if you were drawing a cloak round you to prevent the shower of good fortune from falling on you too heavily."

Constance sighed, but made no rejoinder.

"Why, what on earth is it?" exclaimed the old gentleman, hastily. "What is the matter now? You are free—free of everybody—free of the baronet, of the daughter, of the sister, &c., free of your humble servant, as of the whole world besides. What, then, may I ask, is the use of your sadness?"

"It is," said Constance, with some hesitation, "because you have touched the only point on which I feel a delicacy; therefore I

come to you. I feel most grateful for my independence, and yet—”

“Yet what?—gracious goodness, what?” said the old gentleman, testily, while fidgeting in his arm chair. “My stars!” he muttered to himself, “what man ever yet understood the female sex?”

“Why, I would far rather, Mr. Maliphant, that you would communicate the recent intelligence, with my wishes on the subject, to Sir Reginald Mortimer. Coming from myself, it would seem—”

“Seem!” he reiterated. “Why, my dear young lady, it would not only seem, but be, excessively odd to me, if it came from anyone else—and for two very natural causes. In the first place, Sir Reginald happens to be your own self-constituted guardian, and I happen, also, to be your right well-approved trustee, so that, if I *don't* tell him the whole affair, to

whom, in the name of goodness, should I tell it?

“Why, of course, he is bound to know it all, chapter and verse. And as you are now residing, for awhile, in the house of his sister, you would feel less reserve in opening on the subject, either with him, or through her intermediately. Then, again, should you ever contemplate the formation of other ties—”

Happening to turn towards Constance while thus speaking, and observing a deeper tint gathering on her cheek, he drew up suddenly into an awkward silence, which was hastily interrupted, as if for escape, by his fair client, by coming at once to the real object of her interview. The first attack on the old gentleman was the false one, under cover of which she designed to open the real.

“I almost fear,” she began, again regard-

ing his deep mourning and the change in his features, that, since the loss you have so recently sustained of one who could not be too highly appreciated or too deeply lamented, you can scarcely open your mind to misfortunes befalling, or that have befallen, those who are dear to me and to another."

"My dear Miss Constance," said the old gentleman, taking her hand, "you do me great injustice. I do confess that what little of good might have been rusting in this old dust-box of a body was drawn out by Julian Aubrey; but, although my wasted feelings have been thrown back on myself, I trust that, poor as they are, they are neither buried nor extinct. If I know myself at all," he added, regarding her earnestly, "I would indeed go far to serve you."

"Nay, it is to serve one whom you already know, and, I am sure, respect—it is to serve

my other self in Pearl Mortimer, as I now must call her."

"You mean to say that, in her deep grief for the loss of the departed youth—"

Constance interrupted him :—

"In such a remarkable case, I am bound to undeceive you, and to place the truth before your eyes. The interest of Miss Mortimer was fixed on another (if I may venture so far in addressing the friend) ere she knew of the existence of Mr. Aubrey."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated the old gentleman, "and that noble devotion towards the dying youth, and that deep and affectionate interest that gladdened and threw light on his last hours, and that prayer of hers, when she looked like an angel interceding with her Maker, which caused him to depart in a state of peace, if not of joy, from this life of trial and disappointment—"

“ Were devoted to him,” interrupted Constance, “ wholly and solely from the feeling of regard—I might say, of reverential gratitude—so deep was the sense of respect allied to it, which she felt towards him for the devotion he had manifested.”

“ A noble spirit, in truth,” sighed the old gentleman ; “ and yet, poor Julian ! how little he guessed at the truth either of herself or of her altered position ! Yet, had he known it, another pang,” he added, musing, “ and a fresh wound would have been inflicted, which might well be spared.

“ To die in his opening youth, with all his aspirations growing round him, was sufficient punishment of itself ; but to be commiserated rather than loved, had been, to his fine temperament, of itself, a death-dealing pang. I thank God he was spared it ! There, you see, is his bust, and on his fore-

head you read what he might have been. You see I have also placed a wreath of what were laurel leaves round his brows, for he had one follower and believer in him, at all events, but his reputation lives and dies with him. And now prove to me," he added, passing his hand over his dimmed eyes, and recurring to the present, "show me, while yet I am able and willing, how I may be of service to that noble-hearted lady?"

"It is said in a word—by making a resolved and energetic effort to save the nephew of the baronet—the master, as he was wont to be called in other days—from uttermost ruin, which, without such aid, must certainly befall him."

"But first, how on earth are we to find him? How, and by what clue, shall I discover his haunt?"

"Through the information of those who

knew him in other days, the Gilmours, the haunts of the master are already known."

"But what could have induced him to descend from his position?"

"The change of scene," said Constance, "has changed his character of restlessness only so far that now he is said to seek excitement among gaming tables, instead of on the open shore—the termination of which might be—"

"In ruining, hanging, or pistoling himself, my dear young lady, or, perhaps, on some fine morning, in taking an early cold bath in the Thames."

The old gentleman rose hastily from his seat, and began fidgeting about the room.

"Here, indeed, is something to do, at all events—and I am glad—excuse me for saying it, Miss Constance, but I *am* glad—because it gives me something to do—

because it takes the rust out of me, which I feel is eating on my heart. Yes," he said, pushing the papers from before him, pell-mell, into already overcrowded drawers, "I am exactly the one for this sort of work—won't I ventilate, fumigate, and fustigate the subject to its depths? Won't I, in a twinkling, blow up the Jews, and send them to the foul fiend?—God forgive me for such language! I mean only to say that I will rescue the young man, and make him to see the evil of his ways. In the meanwhile, do you return homeward, Miss Constance, for the evening is advancing. Leave the work that is cut out, to me, as to a gardener who will dig up root and branch. I will follow after the young man, as a ferret follows a rat—the deeper the hole the surer I am of tracking him. I now guess pretty well where to go, and when. These

men, you see, very much frequent the same haunts, to the effect that, in a day or two, at furthest, even in this mighty cauldron of human life (so I call London), we can turn up and search into every simmering and scum of human villainy, in less than no time.

“I am really glad—I say it again. It will be nuts to me to knock about the Jews like tops. I will rescue the duped man; I will bind him hand and foot by his acknowledgments to me, and then I will surrender him a hostage at the footstool of that pearl of price.

“And now,” said the old gentleman, gallantly handing Constance to the door, “as the French say, *au revoir*.”

Constance scarcely forbore smiling; but whether that smile arose at his very original pronunciation of the French tongue, or

because she felt that he would succeed in his mission, seeing that he had thrown his heart and soul into it—and when ever did energy and perseverance fail?—remained a problem.

CHAPTER XI.

Exhausted guilt

Asking eternal rest ; revenge and hate
Foiled in death's gripe, and in that lazar-house,
Amidst the desolation, woman fixed,
The fallen angel still !

Revelations of Life.

It was on a misty and rainy night of dark November. The suburbs of the easternmost Minories were enveloped and hidden in the murkiest folds of vapour, and by the unwholesome reekings of impurer airs respired from the overcharged Thames. It was one of

those peculiar nights which make foreigners marvel how our insular vitality exists and breathes through it; to escape from which probation, they consider the hangings and drownings to which we have recourse as fortunate evasions and escapes from a state of purgatorial existence.

Situated at the extremity of one of the darkest and narrowest of these streets, slightly detached from the row, with flats of marshy ground, opening from behind it, that gave upon the Thames, a rather larger house than the others was obscurely visible.

It presented also a more decayed and dilapidated appearance, as if it had been abandoned, and by design, to the uttermost neglect; as if its gloomy and forbidding aspect had been considered as being rather to its advantage than otherwise. But if more sullen and forbidding in its appear-

ance, and if more of the squalor of neglect hung round it during the day than any other house in the vicinity, compensation was made at night from its possessing and showing the only lights visible along the neighbourhood, redly glimmering from its upper stories, and gleaming forth from the lower premises, while all around was enveloped in darkness.

The large window, opening from the lower room on the ground-floor, had once been closely shuttered, and secured and cramped with iron stanchions, with the design of keeping it more closely guarded from observation. But time and the elements had effected their usual changes on wood and iron. The one had opened in gaping cracks and fissures, freely admitting the light and air, while the other, from the action of damps and

rains, had gradually rusted away, until a child might have forced them. In the meanwhile, not the slightest attempt had been made to support or prop up either by the tenants of that apparent den of sluggards.

Both the house and the low narrow street in its immediate vicinity, might be said to be on the confines of the suburb, and of obscurity, to the effect that it was unvisited by the police, excepting on the rarest occasions, when they were on the tracery of some unusual villainy. Even then, each man entered within its precincts secretly armed, while others were held close at hand, in case of reserve, from the well-known character of the desperates who lived in the neighbourhood.

In passing the house, however, there

was sufficient mystery apparent to arrest the attention of the most callous passer-by. A thin drizzly rain or sleet was now falling, mingling with and condensing the heavy and reeking atmosphere of the night gathering up from the river.

Dim lights might be perceived, faintly illuminating the rainy panes of the windows of a second story. They might have been termed repelling, rather than inviting, in their red and dingy and doubtful appearance. He who paused curiously on his way to listen—where none found the inclination or leisure to pause—might have heard the sounds of various voices, now rising to the highest pitch of excitement, and then as suddenly suppressed; as if some thing, or event, were passing within which absorbed the breathless attention of the beholders. Sudden, yet suppressed, shouts of laughter might then be heard, as if

raised in the exultation of the moment; and these were followed by the tones of wrath and execration, which were more audible still.

The upper story was converted into a hell of the lowest description. A congregation of lawless and desperate men were there met together, to cheat and ruin each other out of that little which each possessed.

But if these sounds were high, and wild, and strange, those which at fitful intervals were heard from the premises below were of a more startling character. The candle, or fire-light, that might be discerned gleaming from between the broad crevices and interstices of the lower shutters, was momentarily and abruptly darkened, as if by the intervention of figures rapidly passing to and fro. Occasionally from behind them screams were heard, as if raised by one in mortal

agony, which then gradually died away, as if the sufferer were overcome by torture. While at their height, interruption seemed to be attempted by a chorus of voices of men drinking and carousing as if to drown them ; but the shriller cries of the woman pierced through them all.

At the cessation of one of these spasmodic outcries, the door of the den of iniquity was abruptly opened, and two men stood within the threshold. From their swarthy, savage-looking features, as by their attire, they appeared to be ruffians of the lowest class. The one, the more powerful of the two, laid his broad hand on the shoulder of the other, as if to stay him from leaving the house.

“Why, d—n thee, Bill, thee can’t go yet awhile, I tell thee. Why, what’s the use of thee taking it on so? Thee didn’t

do it, man—it wasn't thee—dost see? If the old un lying there have cotched a crab, eating her inside away like, what's that to thee? Thou didn't put it there no how. Thou can't help it, d'ye see? Thou'st just nothing to do with it! Come back and drink, man."

"I tell thee how 'tis, Bill—a feller can't help his feelings, d'ye see—there's a kind of summat between us, ye understand; and, though she is an old un, she's my mother, after all, the old blazes; and blow me, somehow or other, but I don't like to see her howling there, like. I do want her to die at once, anyhow?—and so to get her out on't."

"I tell thee what, Tom—that milky heart o' thine will get thee gripped in the hemp some day—if it don't, I'm blessed."

"Howsomedever, I've done all I can for

her. I've just clapped a fresh gin-bottle close to her grip ; so, anyhow, she can drink when she likes—and that's summat."

"It do make her worse, Tom—it do make her worse! 'Tis a feeding fire with fire. She always howls the louder arter it. She shan't take any more ; if she do, I'll be blowed."

"I shall go up stairs to see the play. Pat Bricks, and three or four on um, have catched a fresh game-cock up there—one o' the fast uns, as I do hear ; and they may want a helping hand, d'ye see, for the scratch?"

"Stop a bit, Tom—thee casn't go up, anyhow. Thee mother's quiet just now, and she'll find out where thou'rt gone. She's lying there, I tell thee, all broad awake—cause why?—she never do sleep. She's expecting Jim Crowe, too, who's

coming right down from his rookery to pitch it into her."

"By G——!" exclaimed Bill, slapping his thigh, "and so he is—and if I didn't forget it, I'm blessed."

"Thou must go in, d'ye see? The old cupboard may unlock to him what she wont open to thee; that she's summat on her mind to tell is a clear case. And, mind thee, Bill, if she do begin at the scritch agin—and she's a terrible leaning that way—she may hop her twig in the middle on't, and we shan't be none the better for that neither. The old torch has kept things together like, and blow me if I think the house will go on without her. Matrons, you see, as they calls um, gives a 'spectable air to any house, if so be they keeps in their places."

At this moment a young man hastily

advanced along the adjoining street, and, abruptly quitting the roughly paved way, walked rapidly to the door where the men were stationed.

Although the rain was now commencing to fall heavily, he had taken no precautionary umbrella to shield him from the effects of damp and wet raiment. He was simply attired in a black overcoat, secured and buttoned close up to his neck. His feet were protected in both heavy and serviceable boots. His features wore that austere, and even severe, cast of expression peculiar to men who have devoted themselves and their lives to the first and greatest of all obligations, the moral culture and the religious training of their fellow-men. The men at the door appeared more in awe of his advance than if they had seen a troop of policemen.

"I'll be d——, Tom, if here ain't the Jim Crowe, coming down right smack upon us!" cried out the elder, slapping his thigh with great energy. "He's game to his word—and no mistake as to that matter, no how."

The curate, as he confronted them, showed no change of demeanour at the appearance of men well calculated to inspire apprehension. He received their unprepared and sullen recognisance with neither reply nor recognition, but with the pre-occupied air of one whose mind was absorbed on the great work which lay before him: on the conversion of a worn-out and, perhaps, impenitent sinner.

"Is this the house of Jane Feversham, the dying woman who has sent for me?" he inquired, glancing at the men abruptly and severely; "if so, I am Mr. Bain-

bridge, the curate of the district, and it is my duty to enter here and see her immediately."

And without waiting for any rejoinder, which the men were awkwardly attempting, he pointed them to lead on, and followed them through the doorway.

The aspect of the long, black, narrow chamber which they entered was as desolate as it was repellent. In its immediate front, and close to the shutters, a small three-legged table was drawn, covered with jugs, pipes, and glasses. The air of the room, close and stifling as it was, impregnated with the fumes of tobacco and spirituous liquors, was rendered more oppressive. Two other desperates were sitting at their ease beside the board, drinking and smoking. The empty chairs placed beside them had been occupied by the men who now re-

entered, preceding the curate. Their comrades at the table, absorbed in their occupation, took not the slightest notice of the unusual entrance.

The first glance of Mr. Bainbridge was cast on a low pallet, drawn up at the extremity of the chamber. It had rather the appearance of heaps of clothes flung carelessly together, than a bed. On looking more attentively through the obscurity of the room, lighted by a single candle, a soiled white pillow was partially raised, and propped against the damp wall, on which the head of the woman, slightly elevated, was perceptible. The light placed on the table at the further extremity of the room, was just sufficient to make the obscurity in which she lay, and herself, visible. The bare white walls, dimly discernible, were reeking with trails of yellow damp, that had trickled down

them; and a huge yawning chimney grate was made manifest by a few red embers lying on the hearth, as yet unextinguished.

A low rickety stool was drawn up by the side of the prostrate woman, on which was placed a black bottle and a rummer-glass, more secured from falling by being placed within a broken basket.

The curate stood for a moment beside the pallet and contemplated the woman silently, who appeared unconscious of his presence. He then quietly removed the basket and its contents from the stool, and deposited them in a corner. Ere seating himself upon it, he glanced towards the men at the further end of the room, who were now gathered round the table while silently watching his movements. He raised his arm towards them, and

pointed to the doorway with the air of one who was accustomed to be obeyed.

“Men!—while I am here, either go from this room, or I go from it myself. This dying woman and I must be alone.”

The injunction was uttered with the tone and manner of one who had no doubt of their obedience: it was rather expressed in the voice of command than of request.

The men for a moment looked at the cans; they were unemptied; then at the pipes, which were unfilled; they then looked at each other, and again at the clergyman, who had now drawn forth his Bible. However malcontent and rebellious they were, the instinct of unforgotten obedience was felt and owned; the old habits of discipline for a moment were resumed. They rose slowly and sullenly, and went into the passage leading to the upper floors;

the muttered execrations, as they left the room, were audible only to themselves.

The curate, scarcely waiting for the exit of the last, slowly and quietly shut the door. He then returned to the foot of the pallet, and once more looked down on the moribund.

It is marvellous to observe how certain habits of thinking and feeling express their character on that fleshly tablet which we call the human face, to the utter change from its original cast, caused from the inner knowledge acquired of life and its infinite aberrations.

Gradually, even from the lineaments of men the most feeling and sensitive, the softer expressions sadden, and then depart. But the character of sadness remains, until it gradually deepens and darkens into harsher lines, as outrage upon outrage

proves to us how wantonly or disguisedly our credulities were secretly ridiculed, turned to account, or openly insulted. And thus the mask of the face gradually hardens as all the softer tints and impressions vanish from it. A visage is left from which every expression is fled save the close aspect of cautious scrutiny, that openly challenges the countenance and the eye that it dwells upon ; saving a cold and impassive regard which nothing surprises, and which is surprised at nothing. It is the aspect of one standing on the bank, rigidly braced up to do his duty, even to the danger of sinking with the submerged. A higher aim than personal inconvenience is kept in view—to suppress all remembered sensibilities, if the shadows of such still exist, in the sterner resolve to speak and act the truth, and to save and purify a living soul.

And such was the expression of the countenance of Mr. Bainbridge while contemplating the wretched sufferer beneath him, who, turning heavily on her pillow, was now, for the first time, conscious of his presence in the chamber.

He drew the stool closer to the pallet, and took his seat upon it. The blanket covering the pallet was enveloped and hidden by various coats and cloaks thrown over it, to add to its warmth, in despite of which the invalid appeared cold and shivering, although the heat and the closeness of the room were oppressive.

She now slowly turned her head towards him. Her thick grey hair, escaped from her cap, fell down about her face, adding to its forbidding expression. It was a hard, iron cast of face naturally, now magnified tenfold by the ghastly look given from long suffering

to wasted features writhing under the pangs of mortal disease. She fixed her full opened eyes steadfastly on the curate, as if she but indistinctly understood the cause of his being there.

"Is Bill gone," she asked, "and all the devils that he kept in yonder corner? I don't hear them now."

"There are none in this room besides you and me, the curate of the district, who am here to receive your last confessions, and to administer to you spiritual comfort and consolation to your soul."

"Ay, I see you have begun in taking away the spirit they gave me—all right—it did no good. I was but the worse after it—and now it seems to me that the fire that has been burning and clawing like a live crab through my inside has died out, and I screech no more as if I were in the hell they talk on; but

then, lord, my bowels and legs are now turned colder than any stone."

"The mortification has commenced in her," the curate mentally exclaimed. "The minutes are becoming precious, for they are numbered."

"Now, woman, give me attention, and remember that in the fewest words lies the greatest wisdom; that the chief confessions of a life may be told in minutes; that if the knowledge and foresight of man lie within the compass of a nutshell, the wisdom of the Lord, who knows it, is as infinite as His mercy—a mercy more open to sinners at the closing of their eleventh hour."

"Ay, sir, I once listened to that, some thirty or forty years since, when I was, perhaps, for the while, well nigh as good as you may be yourself; but, lord, that seems as if it belonged to another life, like. I scarce mind it now—'twas so long ago!"

“Then,” said the curate, gently, “the seeds of good still remain within you, or you would have forgotten them. You have trampled them under your feet during a life, but they rise again, and they prove their existence and their life, even at this final hour.”

“No, they don’t, Lord bless you! You are like the rest—like all good men, and you talk like one who don’t know what sin is, beyond what you read about it in your great Book there, that talks of little else. Why, bless you, if you had lived through one of the years I have, and seen a hundredth part of what was done in it, it would have burnt out of your heart, root and branch, all the seeds, as you call ’em, or ripenings, that ever were hatched, or likely to be hatched in you. Why, my heart that you tell about, and my head too, for that matter, is as dry and as old and as withered up as the dust that I’m

going down to, and fast enough ; and I shall be glad to have some sound sleep, and to get away, once and for ever, from all the grief and misery I have gone through here—and have no more waking to it again.”

“Most unhappy and wretched woman!” interrupted Mr. Bainbridge.

“But I ain’t, sir, if you pardon me for saying so : and let me speak the truth now, for once and for ever. I ain’t neither of them—now. I have been, but ’tis all over. I seem to be settling down now, and to be getting quieter and quieter. But there’s something, sir, I did want to tell—a thing I haven’t forgot, though thirty years have rolled over it. It has risen up and been seen—it has clung to me through it all, and I couldn’t get rid on’t anyhow, and here ’tis, tethered on to me, and gnawing me while I am dying! No!—it shan’t go down with me to the grave. I

won't have it, like a worm, creeping silently round me there. It seems to me, and I feel sure that, if I told it to another—if anyone would listen to it—I should get rid on't—'tis a memory like—it won't then seem to stifle me, as it does sometimes,—and so they told me to send for you. Not that you can do me any good; for why?—the faith that you would preach and hold up to me is dried up in the fiery furnace of many a gone-by year; and as for hope and religion, and such like, I never believed in either of 'em since I was a girl."

Mr. Bainbridge saw the exact mental and bodily state of the unhappy woman, and he acted accordingly.

"Woman! it is that confession which I am come to hear. The physician must know the disease, and the clergyman must know the sin, ere he dare venture to administer, counsel, or to heal."

“Ay, that might do for the young ones, but not for me; I am far past it all. Listen then, sir, for I begin to feel the pains might again come on.

“I was a parson’s daughter, ay, sir, even I that lie here the thing you see—I don’t begin my story with a lie—I was a parson’s only daughter—I that am now lying in this corner, beneath this heap of rags. There’s a place in Devonshire, sir, Otterton, I see it now, and by it runs the river that flows into the sea. There was I born, as true a girl as ever stepped, though I say it. Well, sir, I walked on as most do, thinking myself strong enough before I was tried. And then, at last, came the man I liked, and we talked and walked together—on the sly, of course, so the beginning was wrong, as you would say. And then the sin, as you call it, of course followed. And then up he took me to town—before the

break of a fine summer's morning it was—and didn't I pass my father's bedroom without my shoes on? for I only thought of not waking him. I had no feeling, sir, even then, (and *I* wasn't seventeen) no more than a stone. *I* never thought of his white head, in his grief and in his shame, and that I should never see him again, nor he me. Yet the old man was as good and as kind to me as an old man could well be. And why didn't I mind him? and why did I leave him without a thought about it, caring nothing if he died or lived? Just because 'twas nature—just because I had got another stronger passion, that made him in my eyes as weak as water-gruel. And then, when we got to town, wasn't I, for many a long day, as happy as a girl could be? And didn't we love each other, and cling to each other, like one, for the time being? A time that was always to be,—who ever thought of

change? And there we lived the fastest among the fast, for my lover spared nothing, and nothing was good enough for us; and as for me, no peacock was ever half so proud and vain. Didn't I blazon it about in those days, when I heard the young men round us say that I was the finest girl that ever stepped? And didn't I look in my glass and know it was just the truth? And so, in less than no time, I turned from a fresh, new-looking crown-piece, into as brazen a face of copper as was ever stuck up at an ironmonger's.

"Sir, it was a life of lie and of lying that had made me what I was.

"We begin by deceiving, until the tongue and face, from lying, take a second nature, and when we see trusting eyes looking upon our hardened brows, and believing the falsehoods we have thrown out to keep them off the track of truth, we think ourselves mighty

clever and superior to those we took in.

“And then, as to God or seeing or hearing us, if we believed it for a moment we shouldn't lie. But we don't: the fool had said in heart, ‘There is no God’ and which was the wiser of the two—the one that was false, or the other that was true?

“Well, we soon got tired, and glad enough we were to throw each other overboard. He had had enough of me, and I of him, and his back was hardly turned before I cast my eyes on many a better man. And so I walked about in my silks and satins, and was the friend of everybody. Thus I went on for years, and still I heard the men say that I was as fine a woman as could be seen, and still I looked in the glass and I believed it. Well, first one fell off, with the usual lie, and then another, and the worst passions began to

be always uppermost in my mind, until I began to mortally hate the men while I made use of them. Sometimes I walked the streets without any settled home, and sometimes I shut myself up in a crib of my own.

“At last I made a resolve, that while yet I was young I would stand by myself, that I would no longer live like a slave, dressed up in clothes that were not my own, and be sent out, rain or shine, to attend at the theatres, and, if returning alone, to be abused, and be sent wet and hungry to bed. By this time—for long years had gone on—my heart had become harder and colder than any stone. I had, at last, seen something of outer-door and inner-door life—and didn’t I, by that time, know man and woman well?

“And now comes the hottest part of the story. The thing that I did—I cannot well believe—it looks like a dream—’tis so long

ago—but there—I did it. I kept a house of my own at this time, sharing it with one or two devils that were worse than myself, bad as I was. We received visitors and friends, but somehow we didn't get on, nothing seemed to go right; at last we took to the strong hand, and when we found a prize, which came seldom enough, we stopped him then and there."

"Gracious Heaven!" ejaculated the curate, recoiling, "do you mean to confess to me that you have held a hand in murder?"

"No, sir, I don't exactly; but neither you nor the world knows anything of what's done at nights in these same houses; and it never appears, unless when the papers talk about men that are missing, and sometimes when packages of limbs are found drifting about on the water. I didn't lend a hand in such things as stranglings, for

I wasn't strong-hearted enough ; but I had all the will ; and I could listen to the struggles and the pantings in the next room, till it had become like second nature. But there was never any bloodshed ; there was the river all ready to swallow up anything we wanted to get rid of. You have turned away your head, sir ! —you have had enough on't, and yet the worst part is to come."

' Go on, woman, and tell the whole tale. I shall say nothing until you have finished it : but conceal from me nothing."

"I couldn't, sir, if I would. I am driven on now to tell. I feel and I know it. One night—I mind it well, though 'tis twenty years ago—it was a troublous night, the rain was falling, when about midnight one of the swells from the theatre came in with Nancy Dawson. I was

seated in the parlour, drinking in company, the door wide open, so that we could see them go up stairs: and there and then I saw the man that once cast me off and made me what I was, coming into my house.

He had paused by the door with his guide, but, changed as he was, I knew him. The slim figure was lost in the strong man, but there was the same smile, and I could have sworn to the voice among a million, fooling her as he once had fooled me. The blood flew up quicker into my face, and my heart beat till I thought it would have burst.

“I couldn’t see for a moment—everything became dark. A black cloud covered my eyes. I felt then and there that the devil came into me at once. I knew it was so. ‘The sheep is come in to the

shambles,' I cried out, gasping for breath, 'and he shall never leave them alive.'

"And didn't they all stare at me? But when I told them the whole story, they rose up like one woman. My breath came so thick I couldn't draw it. I drank the spirit like water, to keep me up to the mark, and they drank double, and then we laid our heads together, and planned how the thing was to be done. And then the doomed man sent down for supper, and they took it up to him; but *I* was to take it away.

"And then I looked into the glass that was hung on the wall opposite, to see myself, and I seemed to see myself for the first time in my life. There was the broad, staring face of stony hardihood, that was once as fine as any lady's. And there was the figure, now like a loose sack, that once had been called first-rate; and there were the eyes swollen

and lessened like one that had lived on fiery drinks—eyes that the men had once said were killing. And I sprang up from the place with a shriek of revenge that made me gasp for breath, and I cried out—‘They *shall* be killing with a vengeance!’ for I was like one whose body was in a flame.

“They then took up the supper, and silently left the door ajar as they came down ; but I sat on, hearing nothing and no one, till they thought me gone mad. And then at last I heard that villain upstairs singing the same song to Dawson that he had once sung to me scores of times, when we sat side by side, as he now did by her, and when I was as true a girl as ever trod. How I hated him!—how the venom of revenge seemed to curdle round my heart, while I listened, and how it boiled over with each sound!

“Suddenly I caught up the knife from the

table, and was running up stairs, when they sprang up and laid hold of me.

“‘No,’ says they; ‘he’ll be a tough job; make the best of it. Let the wine and spirits act a bit on his brains; both of ’em are drugged enough for a horse.’

“And so I sat—how long I don’t know; it seemed hours; and I looked again in the glass, and saw myself heated and furious, with the she devils on each side, but none looked like me. And then I saw again how everything was gone by—and for ever—youth and good looks, and honesty, and all! I seemed to see where I was—to feel how my heart was dried up and worn out; but what I felt worse than all was the change in my looks. To think that figure was mine, and those eyes, gleaming out like a mad woman’s!—I could abide it no more. I was half up the staircase, when they caught and forced me backward, while they

entered silently, the first being the strongest woman. When I ran in, they had pinned his arms to the chair behind, and then I cried out like a crazed one, flourishing my knife—‘Jane Feversham, you villain,’ while striking full at his heart. I missed, for he was struggling like one mad ; and strong he was. He had swung himself round, and getting free one hand, and then the other, he well nigh pulled the head off the weakest of the women, Anne Summers, but the other clung to him as if life and death were in the grip.

“ But there was no noise—nothing was heard in the room but panting and struggling, as if strong men were silently trying their strength together to heave the heaviest weights. Each clung like wild beasts to the other, tearing and biting. At last, they threw him on the mattress, and Nell Winter, who was larger than any

of us, got the pillows over his head and threw her whole weight upon them—and then we thought the work was done. Dawson had stood by and lent no hand. She had rather liked the man, so she went on quietly with her supper. But the work wasn't done; for while smothering head and breast, they had not thought of the legs. All of a sudden, he flung out like a wild horse, and met Anne Summers in the face, while bending over the bed, a blow that made her scream again, till they all let loose their hold.

“And then he sprang up again, and with one strong blow stretched Winter on the floor like one dead. But, lord—what a face he had, and appearance!—I see him now. I had stood stock-still the while, taking no part in the fight,—I couldn't, for I was sick at head and stomach. He

stood up now, but weak and staggering—for the drugs had told. His face, all blood and flame, was turned on me!—His eyes were as if starting from his head; he didn't seem to care to strive with them more.

“‘Jane Feversham,’ says he, in a voice awful as his look—I hear it now,—‘my curse cling to you at your last hour!’—and then they fastened on him from behind, and threw him easy; his head came right against the edge of the iron grate—he never moved or breathed afterwards, he was dead at once, then and there. And then we sat down on the edge of the bed—they to recover their breath, and I to stare on the body like one in a dream.

“‘There, Jane Feversham,’ says Anne Summers; ‘there’s your goose cooked for.

you, old girl, and I'm blest if it wasn't hard work! I thought he would have done us at one time, and so he would if we hadn't drugged him till he couldn't stand. But 'tis you who have got the real tidbit that never tastes so sweet as when sauced by hatred and revenge.'

"You turn away, sir, and no wonder, still, 'tis all the nature that is given to us, for if it wasn't, it would not have been done. Whatever has been done, has been done before, and will be done again, for we are all the same creatures. When once sunk into the pit of iniquity, there is no pitch blacker or more defiled than the heart of man and woman."

"Go on, I say, go on, and still conceal from me nothing. Such is your only hope and your last resource,—I say again, hide nothing from me."

She continued, as if absorbed in her confessions. The words of Mr. Bainbridge had been unheard or uncomprehended. The memories of the past had arisen and were living before her.

“And then we sat down along the edge of the bedstead, they to recover their breath, and to put their hair and dress, that was all torn and tattered, into a kind of wild order. We sat on, none speaking, each of us looking for awhile at the dead body, and then at the grate. The rule of the house had been broken, for he was wounded in the head, and the floor round it was dyed, and the graze of the knife along his breast had left its mark behind it.

“And then one looked at the other, but said nothing; and then they stared again at the body. It wasn't that either of us cared a farthing for having laid him there, or rejoiced at it when it was done—nothing of the sort.

What we had craved for was revenge: the appetite was satisfied, and we were just looking at the body with indifference and disgust. But what they all knew was, that the hardest part remained—to get rid of it—the how, and where, and when?—risk and danger as there must be. And while we sat staring thus on the body, and then at each other, a miracle seemed to be worked before our eyes. All of a sudden a long, slowly-moving red snake began to steal away from the head of the dead man, and to crawl along the floor towards us! I seemed as if I saw the finger of God tracing out upon the ground before us

Thou shalt do no murder!

And then we all screamed out, and sprang away from the bedstead, and, forgetting the doorway, we all ran to the other side of the room and hid ourselves. And then Nell Winter, who had the iron hand and nerves,

was the first to look over her shoulder. She saw it was the blood of the dead man, and her cheek again grew red, and the scorn of her heart returned.

“‘Precious fools have we made ourselves,’ she cried out, ‘and all for that thing that couldn’t frighten us when he was alive. What’s the use of sickening ourselves, staring and gaping on like a line of crows on that same dead carrion? Let’s put off thinking what is to be done with’t till the morning. Hungry stomachs make weak brains. I stand up for a jolly supper! We’ll see afterwards what he has got in his pockets for Dawson and for us.’

“But there I sat on and stared, while they fetched up the things for the supper—I sat on like one in a nightmare, as if the thing wasn’t real, but would pass. Men, sir, go on talking about murdering, and of the conscience that rises up like

a ghost and frightens them, and the fears, and the terrors, and the pains of hell-fire, but, lord, little do they know, while they hold forth the blacker side of our natures, of the long habits of life weighing upon us, and the wickedness of men that makes women what we are. Why, there were we that night. We thought no more, sir, of doubly locking the street-door when the sheep strayed in, and in making him safe, we made no more to do of thinking quietly how we could but cut him up for the shambles, than does the butcher the calf he has to prepare for morning market. We went to the work in hand quite as naturally, for why?—like him, our hands had got used to such things; the rule being only, that blood was never to be shed in the house. Why, if he had cried out for mercy—which he didn't, for

never a word was said, and he fell game to the last—he might, as well, or better have sung out to the stones in the street as to us; too much goods had been packed off by them for the surgeons to give a thought on the matter. But when I saw his body lying on the floor before me, stiff, and his leg drawn upwards, and his eyes wide open, staring at me, and, as I felt, looking into me, I thought what we had once been to each other. I felt sick at heart, I shivered, and I could look no further.

“ ‘Don’t make yourself a fool, Jane,’ they said from the table; ‘that carrion shall be packed off to-morrow, all safe enough. Let the beaks do their best with it. And now, my old girl, come and turn to, and make a night of it.’

“And so we did, till daylight looked in upon us; drinking, shouting, and carousing

were they to the last. But I felt it wouldn't do; the deeper I drank the gloomier I got. The last toast, I mind, was to the health of the carrion lying behind us in the corner, and success to the journey we had turned him on. And then the days followed after each other, and with every morning, on my waking, the face of the murdered man stuck to me for years. And I couldn't get rid of his last words—I heard them still within me. The curse seemed to have entered me—I never have lost it, and I never shall. And there he is before me in this very room, at the twelfth and closing hour!"

"Go on, go on, to the very end," said the curate, with his head still averted from her.

"And when daylight was full on the room, they all looked pale and death-like, and as sickly and yellow as the lights that

fell on them. They were worn out, but they seemed as if they musn't own it to each other; and each tried to look fresh, and the laughing that they forced, while their cheeks were white, and their eyes were glassy, looked as strange and unnatural as the murder. And then Anne Summers said to me, 'Now, Jane, you must lend us a hand, and a quick one, and not sit staring there and doing nothing. We must dispose of that baggage in the corner there, in different packages, booked for land and for water, and leave the beaks to pay the carriage of it.'

"And then they got up from table, and took their knives, and staggered towards the body—"

"There, stop! I have heard you to the last; go no further,—yet one word more—you held out no hand to them?"

"I hadn't the stomach or the heart, sir, to look on the dead man again."

“That is sufficient—there cease—I will hear no more. Deeply and heavily as your soul is steeped in sin—dyed as it is in iniquity, in the very blackest of crimes, even to murder,—you were not then so far gone, that the accusing Spirit was dead within you. On the contrary, it was heard rising up from the very depth of your iniquity, even from the shambles of the slaughter-house.”

The woman groaned and shook her head,—the curate, unheeding her, slowly continued:—

“What you then called, and even now, in your darkened and benighted ignorance, a failing heart, or sickness of stomach, was the last struggle of that outraged soul that could no more endure the weight of the horrible burthens cast upon it for endurance. You knew not how to throw them off, oppressed by the chains of

habit, that had become a stronger nature still. The voice and warning of the dying man, and his dreadful appearance, awoke the better chord in your nature, which, however deadened, has never wholly slumbered, though shaken by outrages whose name is legion against God, and against your own soul. Evil as he was, he called on you in your very act of murder,—your soul, deeply dyed as it was, heard and answered him, for your last hand was not turned against him as he fell; for why? It was withheld—you could not have struck him. You turn away from me; tell me wherefore?”

“Because, sir, I can’t believe what you say,—because I can’t understand it,—and I am bound here to speak out the truth before God and man.”

“And what is that doubt but the voice of

unbelief? for, had you any belief, could you have lived, or, rather, died daily through a long life of misery and iniquity, as you have done, until your hair was white and your heart was older still? You must answer me, for you can neither escape from me, nor the Death close standing by your pillow. You must hear my words, and mock them if you can. The utterance of the doubt or unbelief from a thing so corrupted, what is it, what could it be, but the utterance of Conscience, stifled, but not extinct, despairing, but not dead!— that takes refuge from that despair in its vain unbelief, from the faith, and hope, and love, against which it has hardened itself from the cradle? For what else can it be, that accusing spirit that rises against you? that Voice that *will* be heard, that will force you to send for a confessor in despite of all the struggles of your worser nature, be its elements formed from

what they may? It can be, it could only be, the conscience that tells your soul it can yet be saved—that you may yet be permitted to hope for another and better state of being when you may again have your trial.”

The woman slowly raised herself on her pillow, and with calm and glassy eyes fully confronted Mr. Bainbridge.

“You are a good man, sir, and a just, and a true believer in God, as shown in your life and in your texts. Wicked as I am, my eyes are opened to the truth of yourself. But I have lived also to know that the wise men and the good know only their own wisdom, and not beyond. There is a knowledge in evil that none but its doers can know, and this truth, too, I know well. It is a knowledge that hardens the heart, or the soul, or the spirit, or whatever you choose to call it, till it seems wiser than belief in its wickedness, and

feels that it looks beyond it, until it ends by laughing at it like a child.

“For the heart has become as dry as dust, and the drops of refreshing water, faith, as you would call it, roll off it like wasted oil, and seem to make the bosom fouler, rather than purer.

“And then, sir, the spirit, or the conscience that wakened me, must be, according to your own showing, a lying spirit, but not an obstinate one, for it does not believe, because it can't. If it were what you say it is, and hope it to be, I should believe and repent, and cling to and glory in my repentance, for who desires to go into the hell flames?”

“Do you mean, then, to tell me, woman, that you are not sorry for the life you have led—that you do not, from your inmost soul, repent of all your iniquities?”

“Yes, sir; I can say that I am heartily sorry; there I speak the truth—for what

would I not give could I begin my life over again ? ”

“ And could your life pass over again now, with the experience which you have drawn from it— ”

“ I would amend it, surely. ”

“ And what spirit is in you that confesses thus much ? ”

Jane Feversham paused.

“ Unless I could be newly born again, sir, and a new person, I answer that the experience I have gone through would make me all that you might approve. But what I have not—as I now am—what it seems to me I never had, or could have had, living as I have done, is either faith or hope. I don't know what the words mean—I never did. I had got strong passions given to me, and I gave way to them, because they were

given. I didn't ask for them, they were forced upon me, and I was carried away by them. Another would have conquered, or, as you would say, wrestled with them, —I couldn't, and then the pleasure I took in their temptations showed openly enough. I saw that the wisest men clung to the same baits that I did, and gloried in them,—how then should the weaker vessel have a chance? And if I had withheld myself, and conquered them, what should I have gained? But I did sometimes strive against them, and when, for a day or so, I put them down, 'twas like a joke to see how they came over me in double strength afterwards. It seemed to me as if I must make amends for the restraint I put upon myself. And so I fell, weaker after every struggle, and I went on falling lower and lower—and still as I got on from bad to

worse, I seemed to grow savager with each downward step I took. And then I ended in plunging deeper and deeper into the mire of sin, the worst and the foulest. And this was done spitefully, and with a kind of fierce hatred against the voice that would rise up to torment me; against the conscience, or whatever else you call it, that had strength enough to stand up and tease me by telling me of the thing I had done wrong, but not the heart or will to aid my strength to do the right.

“I felt that I was made of two spirits—that the conscience, as it is called, did, at last, cease from striving, while the other, the passion that conquered, was, from being always beaten, little beholden to the inward devil that prevailed against myself.”

“Woman!—had you studied language through your life, you could not have

spoken the truth plainer than it comes from you with each word. Dreadful and revolting as has been that iniquitous life, there is a spirit for good contending in you still.’

The woman shook her head.

“Hear me—even as I have heard you—to the very close of your confession, until I ended in praying for you even while I listened. You are now past all sin—all evil—all is left behind, and for ever. You are lying on the pallet from which you will never rise again. I speak what you feel and know—even now the sign and signet of Death is stamped broadly on your forehead. I now, then, call upon you, while yet you are able to understand me, in other and better words, while your soul is listening to me, ere its final departure from that ruined tenement to turn back, in memory, to your earlier youth—remember

once more what you *were* before you left your father's house. It is on the death-bed that the earliest morning of our life rises on us in the clearest vision. Think, but for moments only, on all that you were, and are, and in a word repent of the past, and tell forth aloud your penitence to God! Say it, and saying, feel that, were life again vouchsafed, you would turn again to Him and to the Redeemer of man.

“Let the joy be heard on your dying ear, or be believed in spirit, of those who rejoice on high above one sinner that repenteth, even though it be at the eleventh hour. Let it be felt, let it be owned; and now, join with, or follow me with your heart,” added Mr. Bainbridge, kneeling by her side; “in the fewest words, let us both, as children of the earth, in hope and in faith appeal to him who is—‘Our Father which art in heaven—’”

But the extraordinary change that suddenly manifested itself over the face of the dying woman arrested even the curate, and stayed him in his prayer, familiar as he was with spectacles of death. She had propped herself up on her pillow, and her eyes were intensely fixed on his face, but now with a glassy expression. The faculty of speech was leaving her, retained only for the moment by a powerful and convulsive effort.

“I thank you, sir—again I thank you—I wish I could obey you, but, vile as I am, I could not die as I have lived—a liar! I have no belief, no hope, and no faith. If ever I had them they are dead, but I never remember their quickening. I cannot coin what I never knew. I cannot believe that people who have lived the life that I have done—and not a hundredth part

of its wickedness and profanity has been confessed to you — could ever hope to live again. I know it to be impossible. No," she added, after a brief pause, "I have only one wish—a vain one—on this side of the grave, and I could form no other—I did wish I could have been buried in the same church-yard, but far apart, where my good father and mother—"

She ceased abruptly—the strong recollection caused a convulsive spasm—and in that convulsion she expired.

The curate saw the change in her face, he knew that she was gone. He rose from the footstool and slowly shut up the prayer-book. After crossing his arms over his breast, and bending forward his head, like one absorbed in profoundest prayer, he prepared to leave the house.

On seeing Mr. Bainbridge rise from his

knees, the men, who from the beginning had stealthily watched him through the broad interstices of the door, hastily retreated along the passage, as if the detective had discovered and were after them.

“By G—, Bill, the old un’s packed off. I’m blessed if she ain’t gone. You may take my oath on’t, she’s hopped her twig at last, and like a young un.”

“And why, Tom,” said the other, sullenly, “why, in the devil’s name, is my mother to hop or to jump any more than you or I, or any other man?”

“Because Jim Crowe’s packed up his traps all in a hurry,—the shindy’s over anyhow, and he’s cutting away like bricks, and coves of his colour never gives up while a chance remains for ’em. Her hash is settled for this life, as sure as my name’s Tom Summers.”

CHAPTER XII.

I nursed a fiery independence : mine
The ascendant will, the leader, guiding all.
In riotous liberty we mock'd restraint.
Calm moments grew on us from passion's ebb,
Duty's lost land-marks, hidden, rose and showed
The shallows where we stranded.

Revelations of Life.

WE must now ascend to the upper floor, where the sounds of various voices were now raised to their highest and fiercest pitch of excitement.

In a waste, unfurnished chamber, whose bare walls had once been whitewashed, but

were now streaked with trailing water dripping slowly down them, where two or three wooden benches were dragged near a wood fire, blazing on the hearth, and with as many stools flanking a broad open table, placed in the centre, about a dozen desperates of the lowest class were assembled together.

Ardent spirits, either in tin cans or in opened bottles, were standing on the board, from which each helped himself at will, spilling it over at times, and drenching the cards that were scattered thereon—feats of awkwardness which were met with shouts of laughter or unregarded execrations.

Yet, waste and wild-looking as was the apartment, it was of the largest dimensions, and had evidently seen, in common perhaps with some of the characters met within it, better days. The upper portion alone was frequented; the lower part, to its extremities,

was left to its barrenness and desolation and comparative obscurity. Patches of what had been once tinted paper, hung in mouldering slips along the walls. Shreds and tatters of what had been curtains fell from the cornices above the two naked windows, while, ranged along the bare surface of the wall, the sconces that had once held the brackets of wax-lights were visible. A huge, black, unsightly fissure, left gaping open in the central part of the ceiling, marked the point from whence a large chandelier had once been suspended. It was evident that the large apartment, repellent and savage-looking as it was, had once assumed a very different appearance.

The rasping hands of law evidently, with unusual remorselessness, had stripped the house to its very walls, leaving nothing behind but the denuded anatomy, with scarcely enough to tell of what had once been its covering.

At the present time, the chamber might be said to be as exactly suited to its present company, as it might have been by those who occupied it in its palmy days of enjoyment and success.

The table and the room were enlightened by two candles, ensconced in iron sticks, and fire-light added the rest.

Two of these characters were deeply engaged in immediate play. The group that had gathered round them showed the game was of no common interest. Each of the players formed a striking and remarkable contrast to the other.

The one was a man buttoned up to the chin in a huge, heavy, drab boxing-coat, at once marking him out as one attached to the ring, or on the turf, or as a rat-hunter, or cock-fighter, or else a professed bruiser and beater to pieces of his fellow-man. He

appeared formed by Nature for such pastimes, and for no other, so strongly had habit stamped the animal propensities in his seamed and hardened features. His head was comparatively too huge even for his large person. He was somewhat of under stature, but thickly set and bull-necked, with great breadth of shoulder. On his iron and impassive visage was stamped that insensibility to outward impulses which is the sullen characteristic of the mastiff tribe.

He had, however, by dint of long practice, acquired a knowledge of cards, but he played with an assistance which the habit of villainy had made indispensable. Immediately behind the chair of his adversary, an especial spy, his second, was stationed, who, watching every card that was played, or remained in his hand, conveyed the intelligence from over his shoul-

der to his cove, in a fingered language which was intelligible to both.

Nor was this the worst: for while the amount of the stakes deposited on the table was already lost and won, a veteran pick-pocket—a lean and hungry-looking villain—who sat close behind the duped man, was silently and unobservedly conveying from his pockets whatever there was of money or valuables that remained within them.

It was clear that the sitting and the game, where nothing was left to chance, must terminate in a brawl, and that of no ordinary character. If an iron determination, amounting to inflexibility, was ingrained on the features of the prize-fighter, the closely compressed lip of the duped man, as he lost card after card, and the dangerous excitement momentarily concentrating on his brow, like a gathering thunderstorm, showed that no yielding and no malleable

nature had fallen into their hands. They seemed instinctively to be aware of the truth, for the rugged faces waiting the game round the table, appeared to be watching for a catastrophe, and meaning and lowering looks were already exchanged among them.

Yet, savage as were the desperadoes gathering close round them, and dangerous as was their company, Lionel Mortimer, for it was he, loved the excitement that suited him ; he loved it for the very danger's sake.

Regular bred gamesters play for money only, without which they are driven from the faro-table. Money is valued by them, only as an incentive of action ; the excitement of the play, the hazard, the hope, and the faith in a run of luck keep up the fever. The money which is thus won, they love the more from having won it by calculation. Others, of lower grade, play to win the money only.

The deeper the stake and the more imminent the risk, the fiercer and the more concentrated was Lionel's enjoyment. For the money, or lost or won, he held it as so much dross, the material and the stuff of which play was made, the fuel to raise and feed the flame and add to the enjoyment. A further elucidation might be found in his antecedent life. He had ruled over men as desperate as those who were round him, and in the face of greater dangers, until the habit of ascendancy, although over the few, and on an obscure shore, had its attraction, which indulgence had made habitual.

Change of circumstance had changed the scene only, the character of the man remaining the same. Into the heart of a great city he brought the same restless energy, that must find or make its relief in similar means of excitation. If, then, when checked for a

moment in his career, the voice and spirit of Pearl had made their impression, it was when his pulses were lowered, when reverse had disappointed, when circumstance had forced on him the leisure to dwell for awhile on her remarkable character. The impression had faded, until renewed by her sudden apparition on Waterloo Bridge, again, as it were, arresting him in his career when returning from his present haunt.

As trick after trick was caught up by the broad hands of his adversary, whose eye was still furtively raised, as Lionel considered, towards himself, the angry spot deepened on his cheek and forehead. Suspicion had already entered his mind, although he could prove nothing. The dullest of those who now thronged round the table might see, from the character of the opponents, that a coming crash was inevitable, for the loser, in the

meanwhile, had been robbed and rendered penniless, and with the full connivance of him whose part it was the while to occupy his undivided attention at play.

“Game’s mine—pay!” exclaimed the pugilist, rising, and abruptly throwing down his cards. “Beat you into shivers, man!—down with more of the rhino—and at once!—No hedging—I played you at doubled stakes.”

“You speak, fellow,” said Lionel, glancing haughtily at him, with the lightning rising in his eye, “as if I did not intend paying you. You shall have your money, sir, were it twenty times lost, but you hold no hand with me again, mark you! You are a shuffler—I know it—though I can’t prove it!”

While speaking, Lionel suddenly transferred his hand to the pockets of his coat—purse and pocket-book were gone; but the hand of

the thief was caught while in the act of drawing away his handkerchief.

Lionel sprang to his feet, and caught at once and collared the anatomy of the man behind him.

Shouts of "shame, shame!—he's an old man!" rang round the room.

"This dog, I say, has robbed me!" fiercely exclaimed Lionel, confronting his enemies with the air of a roused lion, and with a voice that was heard high above the uproar.

"Hark ye, my young sprout," said the pugilist, kicking at the same time the table from between them, and sending empty bottles, candles, and cards flying before it, "no tricks upon travellers, if *you* please! No old dodges here—and we know this same old one well enough—eh, my lads?" glancing jocularly round on his supporters.

He was met by a roar of approbation. Ex-

citement was at its height, and the ring gathered closer round them. Thus encouraged, though somewhat deterred, if not daunted, by the eyes of Lionel riveted on him, he laid his hand upon his shoulder :—

“And now, pay!—as I was saying—”

“By the heaven, I swear,” exclaimed Lionel, suddenly backing to the wall behind him, while upsetting two men in the violent movement, “I swear, if you put your hand again on me, I’ll blow your brains into atoms, or the first man that nears me,” and with the word, from the belt under his coat, he presented a many-mouthed revolver.

There was that danger written in the face of Lionel which withheld or dismayed the boldest that stood before him. His adversary, resolute as he was, recoiled, but it was for a second only.

“Seize on and oust him!” shouted a

dozen voices, as instantly the right arm of Lionel was suddenly seized by an unseen ruffian from behind, who had backed to the wall, and at once half-a-dozen powerful men were busy round him.

“Through the window,” shouted many voices ; but the proposition was met by as many exclaiming :—

“No—no !—to the door—to the door !—”

But the resistance of Lionel was so wild and desperate that it required their united strengths to drag him down the stairs, and from thence, opening the door, to hurl him forth into the street, which they finally closed against him with a roar of exultation.

CHAPTER XIII.

Feel these staid pulses—*my* o'er mastering will
Hath palsied them to thine !

Catiline.

LIONEL passed rapidly along the narrow lanes and alleys intersecting the wide streets, through the darkness round him, as familiarly as if it were in broad daylight. The rain was falling fast, and the fog added to the almost impervious darkness ; yet he traversed street after street hastily, and, as it were, intuitively, as

if he could have walked the way he was going blindfolded.

At length, on arriving at a short and retired alley, one of the offshoots among the wilds of Bloomsbury, he tapped at the low door of the smallest of the houses, forming the extreme number of the row.

In one respect, it was unlike any other domicile in the street, inasmuch as it bore a fan-light over the door, showing that it was open at all hours of the night or morning. Lionel abruptly entered, as one to whom the haunt was familiar. He swung open the green-baize door of the passage, again tapped at the smaller door of a back room, and, without tarrying for reply, entered.

It was a chamber of narrow proportions, that seemed filled with a mixture of the foul atmosphere from without, made dimly visible by a candle burning on the central table.

Masses, as it were, of condensed darkness seemed gathered and settled in the recesses of the chamber, made visible by the wavering light. On keener inspection, these masses resolved themselves into bed-presses and chests of drawers, filling and crowding up the extremities of the room.

The air within was close and stifling, respiring staleness, old parchments, and the reek of execrable cigars.

In a corner close to the fire-place, wherein a low fire was kept up, stood an arm-chair, which was noticeable for its unusual depth, and from the rents, evidently from violence, and the rough usage it appeared to have met, although carefully patched up and repaired.

Beside the table, half dozing apparently, in a small chair drawn close to it, with his face toward the fire, was seated the remarkable and well-known Levi Myers, the wealthy

money-lending Jew—the hope and the dread of many a ruined spendthrift.

He had reclined back in his chair, as if in a reverie, or state of drowsy meditation. The once natural proportions of his figure were attenuated to the smallest dimension, by time, and more probably by spare living and self-denial. Nature appeared to have gradually filed him down, taking away all superfluous flesh, and leaving nothing behind saving a network of relaxed muscles and arteries, sharply defining the vivid angularities, over which the yellow flesh was drawn with the tightness of a drum.

The fire on the hearth, or rather its decaying embers, redly visible, infused into him the animal warmth that he lacked, that still kept alive within him a semi-animate circulation. The wheels of the human machine went on, but slowly and niggardly. The lamp

of life was starved of its natural supply of oil, until, in its state of reduced inanition, any sudden shock or revulsion might have extinguished it.

He had aroused himself, and his frail figure was now bent forward towards the embers. His face and contracted forehead were reticulated with the lines of a thousand speculations; but, in despite of the manifestation of a cringing civility, which the force of habit had ingrained round his eyes, there was a hardness of will, an expression of ferocity, latent, yet traceable, in the lines of the pale, thin lips, filed and serrated as they were by iron purpose.

Engrossed in silent speculations, and unwearied—for the night was his day—he inclined forwards toward the hearth; his hands, semblant rather to yellow claws, were rested on his knees. What remained

of his legs was hidden beneath large overfolding pantaloons, whose extremities were bounded by windowed slippers. He heard the doors open, but he did not trouble himself to turn his head to the many comers-in of the night.

"More money, Levi!" exclaimed Lionel, on his immediate entrance, in a voice hoarse with passion—and now, do you hear?—now, I say!" dashing a rickety chair down by the side of the usurer.

"My very dear friend, regard my property, if you please—he-he!" said Levi, chuckling; "you *are* a fast one! You are in full gallop at this hour of the morning, when all quiet folk are beginning to think of their beds. Why," he added, hesitatingly, "at this moment, my valued patron, I could not exactly lay my hand—"

“At this hour, at this moment, ay, at this very second, I say!” shouted Lionel, dashing his clenched hand on the table until the candlestick danced. “I have to return, I tell you, to my den of swindlers; and back I will, though the odds were a million to one against me. Money is the only pass-key of admission. Let me once get in again,” he added fiercely, “and my turn shall come, if I set a dozen policemen at the door.”

“Ay, if that’s the case,” said the miser, slowly turning himself towards the table, “I am your very humble servant, and good morning. Of course I mustn’t say no to you. Besides, I love to see young blood on fire, fighting against all odds, and caring for nothing. I was once young myself—I seem sometimes to mind it, though ’tis become a kind of dream now; I can’t tell how,—he-he!—for I couldn’t do much now, I believe,

with the strong hand. It was strong enough once, and no mistake on that matter, for I have helped to do a thing or two with it in my day: ay," as if speaking to himself unconsciously, "and in this room, and in that chair there, that can't tell about it, though it looks funny. Ay—we have done a thing or two with that same chair that would have turned the stomachs, ay, and the heads too, of you youngsters of to-day!—he-he!—You couldn't have stood by and looked on, I'll be bound—he-he!—"

"No more of your black doings, you heathen dog! however damnable they may have been; I read them in your face, leering as it now is with oily villainy! Money now, and on this table, I repeat, or I'll crack your crazy old crane upon it."

"How much do ye want?" said the miser, opening a secret drawer.

“Two hundred, while you are about it,” exclaimed Lionel, hastily; “that will carry me through the while.”

“Two hundred pounds, young man! And do you mean to say that you wish to be off with it at this hour?”

“At this minute—I swear to you! When ever did revenge wait when the blood was hot, and wild justice its only impulse?” exclaimed Lionel, seeing him still hesitate. “Look, you miserable blood-sucker!—you cast-off hide of the devil! well enough you know that you hold me fast, for you know my expectations. No put-off drivellings with me; no scum and simmering refuse of lies, fished up from your eternal pot of falsehood! No tomfoolery with me! Look you, I am suddenly calm: now hear me, while these pulses are as stilled as yours;—the money—or, I swear to you by the devil, that is your best

angel, I will twist your scrag of a neck into fiddlestrings where you sit !—I am a desperate man—blind and deaf for the hour. Hand over a bond of fifty per cent. if you choose, but *the* money, I say ! ”

The eyes of Levi Myers sparkled with delight.

“ I will do it,” he said, hastily, “ and as much more as you please to ask for. Just sign this little agreement—it is already done ; I keep them by me ready all for signature ; one does business, you see, quicker. Two hundred, did you say—or four ? ”

“ I said for *two* ! ” replied Lionel, fiercely. “ Hand over the bond now, at once, and let me sign my name.”

On that same moment, both were suddenly interrupted by a third party, whose entrance had been unperceived.

“ You shall sign nothing of the sort, young man, I promise you ! ”

Mr. Ralph Maliphan appeared to emerge out of the darkness. He turned abruptly on the miser.

“Why, you old crone,” he began, shaking his clenched hand at Levi, “you withered, you used-up viper! as if I did not know you! Why, I’ll fumigate and fustigate you out of your foul rat-hole here, and I’ll turn all London into it! I will have that tanned old leather hide of yours nailed up against Temple-bar, for the million to execrate as they pass along! I declare to God—may He forgive me for swearing about such an old villain, which doubles the sin!—but I do declare that with to-morrow’s light I’ll expose you to the world’s end. Why, young man,” confronting Lionel abruptly, “this anatomy of sin and of all evil is Levi Myers! Levi, who is known along the Minories to be, without the apology of an exception, the greatest rascal that walks on

the face of God's blessed universe! Why, the very pavements of the streets ask for grass to cover them when they see his wretched legs approaching to walk over them!"

All this, the entrance of the unexpected stranger, his passionate invective, and the astonishment of Lionel, passed in a twinkling, giving time, however, for the miser to shut and lock his private drawer. He then resumed his attitude before the fire, and appeared to relapse into his usual state of passive insensibility, as if he were conscious of no presence beyond his own. But Lionel, recovered from his astonishment, took up the word:—

"May I ask, sir, who you are, or, rather, who you possibly can be, who thus, uninvited and unexpected, dare to enter private rooms as if they were your own?"

"And so they are; they are everybody's rooms who chooses to make them so."

“And,” continued Lionel, unnoticing the interruption, “to insult a man of whom perhaps you know nothing—the proprietor—and dictate to another who knows nothing of you, who never saw you in his life?—”

“Hold there, my good friend,” exclaimed Ralph Maliphant, nothing discountenanced or discouraged by the frowning brows of the irritated young man. “You don’t, indeed, know me, but I know you, and well; and that amounts exactly to the same thing. Add to the account, always in your favour, that you *will* know me, and that very soon; and you will be glad of it, too, I guess. Meanwhile,” he curtly added, observing the impatience of Lionel, “let me take the freedom of remarking that an arrow may be shot, not exactly at, but after you, and by the hand of a good Genius. Now I, heavy and leaden as I appear to you, happen to be that shot, or arrow,

which you like. But what if it should be aimed and pointed towards you by the fair fingers of Miss Cleveland, while approved by no less a Genius than Miss Mortimer herself?"

Lionel recoiled from him in his extreme astonishment and agitation. His first impulse was to place his hand before his face, as if to veil himself from having been found in such a position and under such circumstances; but the old gentleman gently withdrew, and placed it within his own.

"If I am considered by you as a friend, let me assume the freedom of one. You will forgive me, I am sure, for my plain speaking, but such is my nature."

"It is I," said Lionel, with effusion, "who must ask you for forgiveness, but let me ask—"

"No more — not a word more at present. Let us first leave the haunts of this arch-villain

without a word. He knows well where to find me whenever he chooses to do so," he added, while turning and confronting the usurer with a challenging air. But Levi Myers no longer saw or heard him.

"Let us then leave him," said Lionel. "You entered here indeed at the eleventh hour."

"And to stand by you, staunch and true, though the twelfth," exclaimed his friend, "if ever this embottled venom," again confronting the miser in his chair, "unfolds the sting which now he hides."

"Lead me to them," said Lionel, "that I may make my own confessions."

CHAPTER XIV.

I have no eyes save thine with which I see,
I have no tongue when that deep voice is heard,
I have no heart save that which pants in thine !

Catiline.

IN the meanwhile, apprehension, doubt, and mistrust had met together in the saloon of Lady Eleanor.

The breakfast hour had passed in comparative silence, during which an aspect of preoccupation sat on each forehead, excepting on that of the Lady Eleanor. During the meal, she

had, at intervals, made those faint attempts of rally which are necessary failures when given and listened to with indifference. Finally, on the pretext of showing some fine specimens of high art that hung in her boudoir, she left the room accompanied by Pearl.

Constance was about to follow them, when Sir Reginald Mortimer, rising from his seat, intervened between her and the door. His brow was overcast and anxious, and a visible embarrassment rested on the features of Constance. She resumed her seat, while Sir Reginald, as a mode of opening conversation without the appearance of abruptness, resumed the thread of discourse, which had been fitfully pursued while at table.

“Thus it is ever,” he began, “that fortune rarely presents herself with both her hands full. My happiness has been unmeasured, even to overflow, in finding such a daughter;

yet even this blessing comes not unalloyed, seeing, as I do, or rather feeling the truth, how deeply seated is her attachment to Lionel—the more rooted, I fear, from its concealment.”

“Yet surely,” observed Constance, somewhat relieved, “the regret which this impression, if real, might cause you, is lessened. You confess that you have faith in the generous qualities of your nephew, though overruled and misled by impulses that time may subdue. And,” she added, with more hesitation,—“when they meet again, for he cannot forget his recent interest and interference in her welfare—do you hold as nothing in the scale, the influence which Pearl might exert over him?”

“If indeed such really exist,” observed Sir Reginald, doubtfully.

“Why, then, has he abruptly left that

wild sea-shore, where to live in freedom seemed to be a part of his being? Why has he followed and found her, even when buried in the remotest haunts of London, and how is it that he only found and finally restored her?"

"It appears rather to me as if each movement grew out of the chapter of accidents."

Constance shook her head incredulously.

"Perhaps," added Sir Reginald, "it was scarcely safe that he should remain behind. Already he had been suspected as one in league with the contrabandists, but so well was the secret kept among them that detection, even to the detective, had become next to impossible. Indeed, that they were smugglers at all, was, I believe, betrayed at last only by treachery. In the last fatal affray that ensued at night, or rather on the dawn of day, when Gilmour lost his son, Lionel was

unrecognised. The men who were engaged in that conflict did not personally know him. The evidence which Derrick might have given was lost, as it appeared that, enveloped in the thick fogs of the morning, he fell from the precipice."

"But have you forgotten that it was still the master who discovered, or who knew the haunt of the Gilmours here, when all our efforts had proved unavailing?—that it was he who rescued her when in peril?—that he restored her to her supposed parents?—and, as the crowning work, brought back the daughter to the father?"

"I overlook nothing," exclaimed Sir Reginald earnestly; "yet in each of these actions dwells something of mystery. He appears to have been impelled rather from a feeling of duty or obligation than from inclination. He evaded us—and by evident design—ere we

could turn round to acknowledge the benefactor, or stay the motion."

"Some deeper sentiment might have acted on him," observed Constance, thoughtfully. "Perhaps he was painfully conscious of other bonds and obligations, from which he could not free himself. Let us hope that a bright termination is yet to come."

"All human beings live in hope; it is the very food and atmosphere of our life—it is that of my daughter, and, Constance," he added, while taking her hand within his own—"it is mine. Hear me yet again, though it should be for the last time. I turn to you now, as to one who might leave us at any hour; but when you are departed, the light and life of my hope will depart with you. Yet, from the very unselfishness of my love, I rejoice in your liberty. I rejoice in your release from that

sense of obligation which, though drawing not round you a silken thread, is, I know, felt by you ; but you must listen to my last confession."

Constance sat on, silent and agitated ; her face was averted, but the tears were on her cheek.

"If you think that I unduly flatter you, it is because you have not heard the last words of Andrew Rolle, a character which you almost venerated. He dwelt on your name, almost in his last moments, as one who stood apart and alone. Yet even he but faintly echoed, while he confirmed, impressions that had become indelible. To look on you is to wish to share the happiness which is a portion of your being. I am but man if I am selfish enough to desire to share that which I could not give ; but, in confessing this, let me be just to myself in saying that it will be my ardent hope—a desire and a faith as earnest

as your own. I strive also to think, until I believe, that something more than chance has brought us together in this solitude. I would wish to imagine that it was an event decreed to be, but that the effects flowing from it, the attraction or the repulsion, rest within yourself."

"I would almost dare to hope—and what will not man hope when his happiness rests on it?—that you were sent here unconsciously, as the living olive-branch of peace, from one who is now beyond our appeal; one whom I once loved and trusted. In a brief record drawn from past years, I have held up myself as a mirror, but I have not dimmed or sullied it, to veil or obscure my own failings. On the contrary, I magnified each flaw, and represented myself from the side of shadows. Yet," seeing Constance about to answer, "yet awhile reserve that reply. I may gain rather than

lose from that reflection in which I confide."

But Constance was unable for awhile to make any reply, from the agitation of mingled emotions.

CHAPTER XV.

They talk of virtue's steep, o'erlooked the health
And glow of nerved exertion, self-restraint,
Of temperance that gains the ascent, the rest,
And crowning quiet found.

Life's Episode.

AT that moment, an announcement of brusque character, made on the folding doors of the apartment, recalled them to the present. It was abruptly opened, and Mr. Ralph Maliphant entered, with an air of subdued ovation written on his forehead; he was followed by Lionel Mortimer.

"Sir Reginald," hastily exclaimed the worthy lawyer, "I bring my excuse and apology with me. Here is one," turning towards Lionel, "who will speak far more eloquently for himself than I can do. Yet this observation let me first be permitted to make: he enters into your presence as a new man; and the Prodigal Son, if he will allow me so to speak, exists no more."

"Whatever I may have been," said Lionel, advancing toward Sir Reginald with that frank and open mien that carries truth and conviction in its aspect, "I have dared to present myself here, not to vindicate, for that were to defend, but to absolve myself from the errors of the past. I bring with me, also, a conscious feeling of that which I have been; and, I believe from my heart, a true knowledge of that which I shall be."

Sir Reginald Mortimer received his hand

with a pressure that showed the feeling of his reception.

“I receive and I see you,” he exclaimed, earnestly, “in one light only—as the preserver and the main restorer of my child. And here she approaches,” glancing affectionately at Pearl as she entered the saloon, followed by the Lady Eleanor, “and I guess that she will listen to confessions from your lips with perhaps a deeper interest than even her father might give to them.”

While Sir Reginald was yet speaking, the acerbities of the past were melted away and dissolved, as if they had never been ; but the feeling that grew out of them was deeper and more securely laid than if they had not existed.

There are few more rewarding and more ennobling sensations we can experience, than when the heart opens itself to conviction, renews the

broken ties of affections, and triumphs over remembered asperities. There is no love or no friendship so firmly based as that which engrafts itself from the roots of forgotten repulsion.

Such is the mingled perfection and imperfection of our human natures, that when the strongest ties are broken and dashed, as it were, on the ground by our passion, the same feeling, in its relapse, is converted into a virtue, until the flaws and weaknesses that separated are again united, and cement the basis of adamant foundations.

"I dare so far to flatter myself," said Lionel, "supported by such encouragement," advancing towards Pearl with an attitude of deference; "I dare to think so, when I remember that, however changed the position or the ties, the heart of the true woman remains unchanged. I feel that I am standing before

one to whom I owe more of repentance than even to yourself. Hear my confession : it was from the lips of Miss Mortimer that I first heard and felt the words of truth, impressed the deeper from the manner in which they were told. I was checked in my career. I might have been prostrated, but for her interference and protection. It was she who watched near me, when on the sick-bed ; she spoke the counsel that sank into my heart, and which, though I confess it was for awhile put aside, was never obliterated. Yet," he added, with increasing earnestness, "something might, perhaps, be thrown into the opposite scale, however lightly weighing in my favour,—something of attraction towards the lost magnet existed in me still. It led me here to seek for it, leaving a shore that, from her departure, appeared a desert. I confess that, removed a while from her influence, I became something

of that which I had been, though playing at other stakes, where loss or gain entails alike dishonour. This excellent friend arrested me when in the very career of passion and of ruin. It has formed his second office of a like devotional friendship, in this instance also to a stranger, but to one less worthy of his regard. Yet," he added hesitatingly, "I am not free; the chains of pledges I have made still hang round me—"

"Which I can break or loosen," exclaimed Mr. Maliphan, hastily, while appealing, with a glance at Sir Reginald.

"Lionel," said the father, "let me also interrupt, ere Pearl awards her judgment on a confession which became a defence that anticipates its verdict. All that I have is yours. I surrender the case into the hands of our mutual friend, if so he will allow me also to call him."

The worthy lawyer, while in full acknowledgment, now muttered something to himself respecting the "secrecy and privacy indispensable in the final settlement of family affairs." He fidgeted, and was about to withdraw, when Sir Reginald stayed him, placing his hand on his shoulder.

"Of all men," he said, "you are the very last whom I should desire to see absent himself from us at such an hour. My sister Eleanor," he continued, "is already aware of the full extent of my sentiments towards Miss Constance, which, if I may dare to believe it, have been heard, not unfavourably, by herself."

Constance turned towards Lady Eleanor, who received and affectionately embraced her.

"I have then, at last," she said, "realised one, and the best, of my idealisms. I have

found a veritable sister, and how I prize her shall be proved by the future."

"Pearl," continued Sir Reginald, in the fullness of his happiness advancing towards her and Lionel, who had been deeply engaged in side converse in the recess of the saloon, "have you yet found in your heart to forgive and to forget the long list of his inattentions? Have you weighed him with the balances of the heart?—and do you find that his few good deeds towards you, backed by the usual make-weights of the best intentions, more than counterbalance his errors—or, call them rather—shortcomings?

"You, perhaps, saved his life once: but he certainly preserved your own, and mine also, and these might be thrown as something in the scale. To me his greatest fault appears that, having found the olive branch, he could not wait to see it engrafted on the parent trunk. Can

you really forget and forgive this?—I almost think so ; especially when you set against the account the act of restoring the child to her father.”

“Ask her not, I entreat of you, too abruptly,” said Lionel, seeing that the cheek of Pearl was deeply tinged, and her face averted to the ground.

“I will at once answer the Master of Morte,” she said, raising her eyes towards him, “for so Pearl will address him for the last time. He first saw me, as the smuggler’s daughter, on the shore, with nothing to commend her to his attention beyond her poverty and her truth. Yet, even then, he had at times listened to her words. Even then, she was conscious that she held some slight influence over him, perhaps unacknowledged by either. But even then, she saw and felt that his ac-

tions, however motivated, were unmistakable; they were hazarded at the compromise of honour, and the sacrifice was made for ourselves. And now he recognizes me as your daughter," she added archly,—turning towards her father,—“and I should like to know—yes, I should really like to know—in which of the two characters he most prefers me:—whether as the daughter of his uncle, or as the maiden free on the wild sea-shore?”

“Exactly,” said Sir Reginald, embracing her, “my own noble-hearted Pearl! Why, Lionel,” he added, turning towards his nephew, “bashfulness is certainly a new trait in your very original character, and it is brought out, I see, in the fullest relief by my daughter.

“Why, don’t you see—or where are your eyes—that they who ‘wait and hope’ are

sure of their eventual reward?—that, during our natural lives, we must all, more or less, learn to hold a hand at the game of ‘Patience.’ To wait and hope is the one and sole solution of the problem of life. If we cannot unravel the enigma, if we find its intricacies more inextricable as we advance, we hold, at least, two spirits within us that shall strengthen and animate us to its latest hour. Do you not see that your forgiveness, and, perhaps, something more, is written in the dimples covertly playing round the smile of those beautiful lips? Can you not really see that they would not be greatly shocked, or, rather, that they almost invite the seal, or, in less poetical phrase, the kiss of reconciliation—why *don’t* you take it?”

THE END.

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